Winter March 2015

Integrating Cultures within Formal Schooling: Exploring Opportunities for Cultural Relevancy in Peri-Urban Senegal

Karla A. Sarr
University of Massachusetts - Amherst

Integrating Cultures within Formal Schooling: Exploring Opportunities for Cultural Relevancy in Peri-Urban Senegal

A Dissertation Presented

by

KARLA GIULIANO SARR

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 2015

Education Policy and Leadership

Integrating Cultures within Formal Schooling:
Exploring Opportunities for Cultural Relevancy in
Peri-Urban Senegal

A Dissertation Presented

by

KARLA GIULIANO SARR

Approved as to style and content by:

_____
Gretchen B. Rossman, Chair

_____
Emiliana Cruz, Member

_____
Ash Hartwell, Member

_____
Bjorn Nordtveit, Member

_____
Christine B. McCormick, Dean
College of Education

DEDICATION

To my babies and, of course, my kind, humorous, and supportive husband.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I owe an endless amount of gratitude to the teachers, school director, students, school personnel, and community members who so graciously opened their lives to me during my research period. I continue to be overwhelmed by the generosity of Senegalese *teranga.* Of course, none of this would have been possible without the assistance of my research associate. Due to concerns for anonymity, I cannot thank him directly by name, but I hope he realizes that this dissertation would not have been possible without his interest, trust, and competencies.

I also wish to recognize the warm community at the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. It has been a home away from home and a supportive setting on a large campus. Dr. Gretchen B. Rossman, especially, has served as a knowledgeable and encouraging mentor and advisor while taking into account life's realities. Her steady hand is much appreciated.

Lastly, I must acknowledge the numerous family members - nuclear, extended, and chosen through marriage - who have gracefully supported and tolerated my distracted nature throughout these past few years. My in-laws in Dakar allowed me peace of mind and flexibility when caring for my daughter during the long hours I was at the research site. My parents, Janet and Vincent Giuliano, have provided invaluable support, including numerous meals and countless babysitting miles and hours. Of course, there is Abdourahmane (Abou) Sarr, my husband, who has embraced living in New England, put on the dishwashing gloves, and never tired of my inquiries into Senegalese languages and cultures. Thank you all. *Mangi leen gerem.*

ABSTRACT

INTEGRATING CULTURES WITHIN FORMAL SCHOOLING:
EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CULTURAL RELEVANCY IN
PERI-URBAN SENEGAL

FEBRUARY, 2015

KARLA GIULIANO SARR, B.S.F.S., GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

M.Ed., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Ed.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Gretchen B. Rossman

Within the context of Education for All's (EFA) mandate for universal primary school attendance, the cultural relevancy of education is particularly salient to issues of educational quality. Drawing from the literatures on Indigenous knowledges and education, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, and mother-tongue based multilingual education (MTB-MLE), the lens of analysis for this study acknowledged that incorporating students' cultures and Indigenous knowledges within formal schooling may contribute to increased learning opportunities and thereby improve student outcomes. The purpose of the dissertation was to focus on the experiences of one Senegalese peri-urban primary school in incorporating students' cultures and realities. Research participants included school personnel, students and community members. Using a compressed ethnographic research design, this study took place intensively over a period of four weeks and utilized multiple data collection techniques, including participant observation, student focus groups, and interviews. The results of data analysis identified a number of promising practices as well as challenges related to increasing cultural relevancy. One of

the central findings demonstrated how the public school system's new competency-based curricular model, called *le Curriculum*, may create openings for integrating students' cultures and Indigenous knowledges. Findings further provided evidence of how Senegalese cultures and national languages permeated school interactions, entering deep within classrooms, and even as major components of lesson content. Lastly, this study also concluded that, despite persistent challenges, schooling in Senegal may be progressing towards greater alignment with students' realities than is often presented in the literature.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARED	Associates in Research in Education & Development
CI	*Cours d'Initiation* (1st grade)
CP	*Cours Préparatoire* (2nd grade)
CE1	*Cours Elémentaire 1* (3rd grade)
CE2	*Cours Elémentaire 2* (4th grade)
CEB	*Curriculum de l'éducation de base* (Basic education curriculum)
CFEE	*Certificate de fin d'études élémentaires* (End of Elementary Studies Certificate)
CGE	*Comité de gestion de l'école* (School Committee)
CM1	*Cours Moyen 1* (5th grade)
CM2	*Cours Moyen 2* (6th grade)
DPRE	*Direction de la Planification et de la Réforme de l'Education*
EFA	Education for All
L1	First language
L2	Second language
LOI	Language of Instruction
MTB-MLE	Mother-tongue based multilingual education
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PDEF	*Programme decennal de l'éducation et de la formation* (20 year plan for education and training)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Within the context of Education for All (EFA), in which more and more children are participating in formal primary schooling, the cultural relevancy of education is particularly salient. Cultural relevancy addresses how schooling forms and content resonate with, ignore, or rebuke students' lived realities. Greater cultural relevancy is an indicator of educational quality, an issue that is gaining traction in the field of international education as countries come closer to deadlines for universal primary education (Alexander, 2008). Like many other countries, Senegal has made universal primary education a priority for 2015 (Niane & François, 2007). While Senegal has made notable gains in access, it is still far from reaching its goals (Direction de la Planification et de la Réforme de l'Education [DPRE], 2008; UNESCO, 2012). To illustrate, despite having the highest allocation of government expenditures for education of all of Sub-Saharan African countries, Senegal falls below the region's average for universal primary education (59.9% compared to 66.9%) (UNESCO, 2012). Additionally, only 41% of Senegalese children who begin first grade continue on to middle school (DPRE, 2008). In light of such conditions, I argue that incorporating students' cultures and Indigenous knowledges within formal schooling may contribute to increased learning opportunities and thereby improve student outcomes. A comprehensive review of the literature extends this argument further, identifying that greater cultural relevancy may also strengthen the community-school relationship, foster cultural validation and maintenance, and promote self-directed socioeconomic development. Indeed, cultural relevancy also supports

human rights, as articulated in Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

> Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. (2007)

This dissertation presents a compressed ethnographic study of one primary school in a peri-urban community in Senegal and identifies a number of promising practices as well as challenges related to increasing cultural relevancy. Privileging a thick description, I explore the ways in which the public school system's new curricular model, called *le Curriculum*, creates openings for integrating students' cultures and Indigenous knowledges. More specifically, this study addresses the following research questions:

- Is schooling alienating and disconnected from student realities?
- How might school activities and classroom practice, specifically in their treatment of cultures and Indigenous knowledges, reinforce the hegemonic status quo and/or to the contrary, support anti-colonial or decolonizing objectives?
- What are potential openings and areas for continued growth for integrating cultures and Indigenous knowledges within schools?

I shall argue that findings from this study provide evidence of a common thread of Senegalese culture that permeates school interactions, entering deep within classrooms and as a major component of lesson content. Close attention is paid to the roles of national languages and religious influences within the school grounds, as well as teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and actions towards cultural relevancy. In sum, findings suggest that, despite continued structural and policy obstacles, schooling in Senegal may be

progressing towards greater alignment with students' realities than is often presented in the literature.

Complications of Cultural Misalignment

In general, Senegal's schooling system continues to be patterned on a Western model based on France, its former colonizer. This illustrates the worldwide tendency for education systems to ascribe to a global culture of schooling characterized by nearly identical elements with little adaptation for the world's diverse histories and cultures (Baker & Letendre, 2005). In such situations, typical schooling elements are generally based on Western knowledges and epistemologies, which produces a situation where the culture of schooling often does not align with local or students' cultures. When existent, this misalignment subsequently compounds educational challenges that arise from other factors, including poverty and poor education quality, inequality, rural-urban differences, scarce resources, and underqualified and poorly motivated teachers (UNESCO, 2011). Furthermore, irrelevant schooling models have 1) ignored Indigenous knowledges and approaches to learning (Altbach, 1971; Kanu, 2006; Ouane & Glanz, 2011); 2) weakened local knowledges, cultures, languages, and learning (Devisse, 1985; Dei, 2000a; Diallo, 2003; Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Odora Hoppers, 2009; Owuor, 2007); 3) fostered inequalities between societies' elites and the masses (Moumouni, 1968; Blakemore, 1970; Dei, 2000a; Owuor, 2007; Keane, 2008); and 4) had negative psychological implications, including promoting a sense of inferiority (Ngũgĩ, 1993; Quist, 2001).

The negative psychological ramifications of irrelevant schooling are particularly troubling and detrimental to learning. This includes the devaluation of Indigenous

knowledges and the development of a sense of inferiority, incompetency, and marginalization for many Africans (Semali, 1999; Quist, 2001; Dei, 2002; Ntarangwi, 2003; Odora Hoppers, 2002; Hountondji, 2002; Ntuli, 2002). In addition, cognitive deficiencies, feelings of insecurity, and self-doubt arise from the imposition of ideologies (Odora Hoppers, 2009) and surely negatively affect the way that students engage in learning. Personal testimonies abound within the literature (see Ngũgĩ, 1993; Semali & Kincheloe, 1999; Dei, 2002, 2010; Asante, 2010; Diallo, 2003; Ntarangwi, 2003; Diame, 2011). These individuals characterize their experiences of education as distancing, foreign, partial, and as "a process of alienation" (Ngũgĩ, 1993, p. 57). Moreover, feelings of alienation and devaluation continue to characterize learning for younger generations of Africans, persisting to the present (see Quist, 2000; Dei, 2002; Diame, 2011). Unchecked, this problem perpetuates a vicious cycle through which successful students may become the elites who, in turn, maintain a repressive system.

The subjugation of local cultures and Indigenous knowledges in the formal schooling system obviously also has negative impacts for learning. Educational experiences incongruent with students' languages and cultures lead to further feelings of disconnect, resulting in the passive internalization and compartmentalization of information as opposed to productive synthesis, often resulting instead in an aversion to schooling (Jegede, 1997; Semali, 1999). Such learners find themselves in an impossible and fatiguing situation at the meeting point of distinct worldviews (see Nakata, 2007; Odora Hoppers, 2009b). When students' cultural references are absent, they cannot benefit from a modeling of recognized coexistence and simultaneous validation of their heritage with the globalized world (Semali, 1999). Whereas the lived realities of children

in African contexts often display a syncretism between the multiple cultures and knowledges that make up students' realities, oftentimes their understanding of the relationship between school and home knowledges remains at the level of the superficial dichotomy between Indigenous and Western knowledges. Although some Africans find success in formal schooling, the numerous individuals who do not succeed provide impetus for investigations of how students' cultures and Indigenous knowledges are handled within the classroom and to promote supportive strategies.

Now that I have provided an overview of my arguments and outlined the detriments of culturally irrelevant schooling that may ignore and/or even rebuke students' cultures, I will provide a brief overview of the community and school in order to better situate the research site for this present dissertation research. I will conclude this Introduction with a mapping of the chapters that follow.

Presentation of the Community and School

The town that served as the research site is located along the coast leaving Dakar and heading into the country's interior. It is typical of many in Senegal, having characteristics corresponding specifically to a handful of towns that are simultaneously traditional villages of the Lebou ethnic group and expanding peri-urban communities. Like other towns, it faces many development challenges, including high levels of poverty, limited economic opportunities, an exodus of its young population to urban centers and abroad, struggling health care facilities, etc. The dual identity as a historically Lebou settlement and growing landing place for incoming multi-ethnic populations results in some inhabitants feeling deeply rooted while others feel more precarious.

Because the town is one of the suburban centers that now make up the urban sprawl from Dakar into the interior, it is labeled as a "*banlieue*," a French term equivalent with "projects." In this section, I provide an overview of both the community surrounding the school and the school itself. (A more detailed cultural description is provided in Chapter 4.) For the sake of preserving the anonymity of the research site, I mask certain particularities of the town and school.

The Town

According to a local historian and the school director, the town was founded in the 1400s[1] by members of the Lebou ethnic group. I will describe this group and its history in more detail below. The present-day town has several sections. The oldest part of the town, commonly known as "*le village traditionnel"* / "traditional village," starts on the beach and spreads inland. The newer developments of the town are built between the *village traditionnel* and the main highway leading into the interior of the country. Since 2000, the town has experienced an infrastructure and population boom due to increasing industry in the area and the accelerated Dakar sprawl. At the time of on-site research, at least three major factories were located in this town, two of them representing foreign investments. To illustrate the rapidity of change within the community, one teacher described the town as "*jusqu'en 2005 c'était une foret* / up until 2005, it was a forest"

[1] Note that there is a discrepancy between this information and what I was able to locate in other resources (XXXX, 1952; Sylla, 1992; XXXX, 2009). For the sake of consistency, I maintain this date here as it is the date that students also learn in their classes. I will explore this more in the section on student investigations. Also, in reference to in-text citations, in order to protect the identity of the town and the research participants, I have chosen to omit complete bibliographical citations when appropriate. For purposes of subsequent research, individuals should contact me for complete citations.

(Monsieur Sy, Veteran floating teacher)[2]. Another research participant indicated that the paved road that leads from the national highway into the town was paved only two to three years prior to my research. The other roads remain unpaved sand or dirt roads. Despite the designation as being a suburban area, this town does not entirely have an urban or peri-urban feel, quite the contrary. There is a palpable sense of history as well as dedication to more traditional activities and a communal way of life, as I shall describe in later chapters.

The Population

While population figures are uncertain, the school's director estimates the town to have approximately 5,000 inhabitants. These individuals can be divided into roughly three categories: 1) descendants of the original Lebou founders, 2) a smaller Pulaar population that arrived in the second major wave of migration to the town, and, 3) a growing number of inhabitants from all parts of Senegal seeking economic opportunities in Dakar. While it was not possible to obtain statistics on the ethnic breakdown of students at the school, participants indicated that the Lebou population may be waning in its majority with the more diverse newcomers representing a growing significant portion of the population. For this reason, many participants made reference to the notion of a "melting pot," both in describing the school as well as the locality. However, others indicated that the Lebou traditional village remains the town's center in spite of the effects of urban sprawl. In any case, both Lebou and Pulaar groups are known for

[2] This citation indicates the name and role of research participants. All participants were given pseudonyms. See Chapter 3 on research design and methods. Also see Appendix for list of participant characteristics.

maintaining close cultural ties. As I will indicate in subsequent chapters, many of the cultural references presented in this study connect to Lebou culture and history, as well as to a shared Senegalese culture (see Chapter 2). The town also maintains significant ties to Senegal's religious brotherhoods, particularly the Tijaaniyya, as prominent religious leaders having intermarried with people from the town.

Because of the prominence of Lebou people within the town's history, current population, and cultural references evident within school activities, I present here a brief history of their ethnic group. To begin, several arguments explain the origin of Lebous, including that the Lebou people originated in far-off lands, such as India, and Egypt (Sylla, 1992). Several migrations also characterize their history, with Lebous arriving in the Cape Vert Peninsula of Senegal, the area that includes Dakar, in the 16th Century (Sylla, 1992). Lebous are widely known as the first people to settle in that area and today, Lebous continue to inhabit the most active parts of Senegal, including the Cape Vert peninsula and the Petite Côte. These areas encompass Dakar, as well as Rufisque, an important center during the French colonial period, and the touristic towns of Mbour and Saly, both of which are significant economic hubs. The town that served as research site is identified within the literature as one of the oldest Lebou villages on the peninsula (XXXX, 2009).

The ethnic origin of Lebous is similarly ambiguous. Some identify Lebou ancestry as having both Wolof and Sereer roots, having spent time in the Saloum region of Senegal (XXXX, 2009). In addition, XXXX (1952) speculates that Lebou people also have Sossé (or Mandingue) origins. Similarly, it is argued that Lebous spent time with Toucouleurs in the Fouta Toro region of northern Senegal, which may explain continued

privileged relationships with Pulaar groups. At one point, however, the Lebous became a distinct ethnicity, having developed the Lebou language, a registry of Wolof, and the reputation as skilled fishermen and agriculturalists. They also continue to practice well-established lineage and aristocratic systems (Sylla, 1992), and many Lebou people play a prominent role in the Senegalese state's political system, including holding prominent positions in Dakar's government. While I will provide more description in Chapter 4, Lebous are also widely known for spiritual and healing practices, including the *ndeup* exorcism ceremony, which has gained international recognition. While the majority of Lebous are also practicing Muslims, Islamic influence and significant conversions occurred later with Lebous than some of the other ethnic groups in Senegal (XXXX, 2009).

As far as language is concerned, the town is located in a Wolof speaking area and Wolof serves as the lingua franca (see Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of Wolofization). As I indicated above, however, the Lebou population continues to speak a language of the same name, which is closely related to Wolof. The use of Lebou was evident in both conversations with parents as well as with students at the school. Moreover, Lebous typically speak both Lebou and Wolof. Similarly, individuals of other ethnic groups may continue to speak their heritage languages as well as mastering Wolof. This was certainly the case for the students of Pulaar origin participating in this study. While I discuss language usage in greater detail in Chapter 6, the fact that French remains the official language of instruction (LOI) is rather problematic and indicates a significant challenge that many students may face once at school. Because Wolof serves as a

unifying language for all of these individuals, Wolof is the focus of language issues in this dissertation.

The School

In order to better situate the school, I provide information in this section about its history, structure, school day, general culture, and lastly, recruitment efforts. To begin, within the town, there is one public primary school and several private schools, both secular and of religious affiliations. In speaking with the primary school's director, he indicated that children with greater financial means often attend private schools. While the town has a middle school, the closest public high school is located in a neighboring town. As background information, the primary school was founded in 1980, fairly late compared to other towns in the area, including a neighboring town, whose primary school was established in the 1940s. As I will explore below, the population's aversion to formal schooling and ties to cultural practices and livelihood activities, namely fishing, may explain the school's relatively late installation. When the school opened in 1980, it had six classes, one for each grade. Over time, it has grown to incorporate two classrooms per grade for a total of 12 classrooms. Within the Senegalese formal schooling system, grades are further divided into three cycles with two grades in each. The first grade of each cycle is considered an introductory level with the second termed a "*classe de consolidation*" or an enrichment level. The sixth grade (CM2), which serves as the main focus of this study, is an example of such a class. (See appendix for a chart of grade level equivalencies.)

At the time of my research, there were over 700 students enrolled at the school. Just over half of the students (53%) were girls. Class sizes range between 47 and 75 students. In general, children begin primary school at age 7, and while it is not typical, students may remain at school until age 14 or even older. The school's personnel numbers 19 individuals, including the Director, 16 teachers (12 classroom teachers, two Arabic language and religion teachers, and two floating veteran teachers), a cleaning woman, and a security guard. While the majority of teachers are female (12), the Director and all but one of the more senior teachers are male. This gender composition is significant to the current topic of cultural relevancy in education because, as in many African settings, women in Senegal are seen as the keepers and transmitters of culture and Indigenous knowledges. The school director was also eager to point out that his school has a high ratio of female to male teachers, something he indicated as common of more urban areas.

Structurally, the school is relatively well equipped and maintained. It has a wall, a main gate, a massive courtyard, and separate lavatories for girls, boys, and personnel. The Director also lives on the property with his family. His office is adjacent to his house. Within the classrooms, students sit at *table-bancs*, wooden desks with a shared writing surface for two or three students. While most of the desks seemed to be in good condition, there were others that were falling apart. In at least three of the classrooms at the school, the desks were arranged in small groups, while the majority of classrooms had the desks arranged in a more classic configuration, as columns facing the front blackboard. All classrooms had blackboards on both front and back walls as well as a small bulletin board near the teacher's desk. In addition, one of the classrooms hosts the school library that operates everyday during the morning break. The library is made up of

five modest shelves in the back of a classroom as well as a large trunk containing books, many of which were received as donations.

As further illustration, in all the classrooms I visited, teachers have made attempts to put materials up on the walls. They range from simple black and white photocopies of objects with labels (such as shapes and body parts), photocopies of student books, small maps, colorful images taken from magazines, a framed picture bought by a teacher, and posters and drawings heralding education and supporting human rights and development projects. In all cases, while teachers have made attempts to beautify their classroom, decorations are meager and a few teachers indicated wishing they had a budget dedicated to that purpose.

In terms of the general school budget, funding from the Ministry seems severely limited. However, partnerships with foreign schools and a development project aimed at girls' schooling seem to help off-set this gap. In addition, the *Comité de gestion de l'école (CGE)* (School Committee)[3] allocates funds for utilities and maintenance. Parents must contribute to this fund for each child enrolled, although it seems marginally enforced. In addition, the school receives donations from other sources. These include the mayor's office, which contributes school supplies, such as notebooks and pens. There is also an anonymous donor who supplies boxes of chalk, and a French family that has supported the school for a number of years. The family sends school supplies annually, including having sent a photocopier, which has since fallen into disrepair. In citing these gifts to the school, the Director noted that they are integral to student participation. In general, and in

[3] The CGE represents an effort by the school's administration to circumvent the *Association de parents d'élèves* / Parents' association. By all accounts, its functionality seems to be handicapped by an aging leadership refusing to turn over control to the younger generation. It remains inactive.

light of severe economic hardship for some families, students seem fairly equipped with materials, including some art supplies. Textbooks, however, are the exception (see Chapter 6). Each classroom also contains a supply cabinet and there is one materials chest for each cycle that contains additional supplies, including balances, weights, maps, and posters.

The school operates during the academic year, and classrooms are open Monday through Saturday. School begins at 8 am, with a break from 11-11:30 and a lunch recess at 1 pm. Afternoon classes are scheduled from 3-5 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There are no afternoon classes on Fridays and classes only meet on Saturdays for exceptional reasons. In practice, however, 6th grade classes meet in the afternoons Monday thru Thursday in preparation for the end-of-cycle exam.

While I will address the culture of the school itself in great detail in subsequent chapters (see Chapter 5, in particular), it bears mention here that the school atmosphere seems to be highly agreeable. Teachers get along with one another, and there are several ways in which they exude solidarity for colleagues as well as for the student population. The school also serves the community in several ways, including opening classrooms up at night and on weekends for community use. A group of alumni are also active at the school, perhaps indicating that some graduates found the school to be satisfying.

As indicated above, while the school presently seems to have a positive relationship with the community, historically, both the Lebou population and the Pulaar populations were resistant to schooling. Rather than investing their children and time in school, many Lebous instead focused on fishing and other sea related activities. Similarly, Pulaar children also contributed to their families' economic practices. While in

other localities, these might include taking care of cattle and other livestock, activities in this town seem more commerce-oriented. In addition, it is fairly common for some Pulaar parents within this community to marry off their daughters at an early age, putting an end to schooling. In addition, and for all members of the population, many parents choose to send their children to Quoranic schools instead of to the "French" formal school. (I will discuss Quoranic schools further in Chapters 4 and 5.) Such details are significant to this study on cultural relevancy because they illustrate how even in an area that has become peri-urban, culturally embedded practices and considerations continue to inform peoples' decisions and behaviors. These will serve as the backdrop for this dissertation.

Nonetheless, the Director is quite pleased with the progress since 1980. Both in terms of recruitment and results, he describes them as "stable." This supports a general sense that a new trend is emerging within this growingly diverse community that is supportive of schooling. Participants indicated to me that parental support of school is improving. Moreover, several factors may account for students' growing school attendance. These include the decline of fishing activities, successful recruitment efforts, the arrival of newcomers eager to attend school, and the visible demonstrated financial success of school graduates. Recruitment efforts by the school and its teachers have taken many forms, such as after school activities like market gardening, sports and theater, and at present, development project-related home visits and awareness campaigns. Notwithstanding, teachers also describe a difficult transition for many of the students and their families, particularly when being in school means forgoing lucrative activities.

Overview of Subsequent Chapters

In this dissertation, I provide evidence of ways in which cultural references and Indigenous knowledges are present within schooling experiences. I also identify instances of obstacles to greater inclusion, which extend the literature. Several theories serve as the foundation for these arguments and include post-modernism, post-structuralism and post-colonial framings. These theories are addressed in Chapter 2, in addition to a review of relevant literature and perhaps most significantly, a detailed explanation of the terms culture and Indigenous knowledge. In line with the conceptual framework presented in this chapter, I privilege multiple viewpoints and voices throughout this study, both in my choice of design and methods, as well as in my analysis and subsequent presentation of findings. Chapter 3 provides an in-depth description of the research design and methods that comprise this compressed ethnographic study. Principle techniques include participant observation, interviews, and a student focus group that incorporates a photo elicitation activity. This chapter also provides insights into decisions made during the data collection and subsequent analysis and writing phases.

Once I have established the research design and conceptual framework, I move on to present the data and analysis, which form the bulk of this dissertation. I begin by providing a more nuanced exploration of the identified community's cultural practices and Indigenous knowledges in Chapter 4. This discussion helps to further situate interactions and references that serve as illustrations throughout the study. Here, I will touch upon students' and parents' daily activities, as well as specific elements of Indigenous knowledges, such as oral tales, healing, and spiritual practices. I also address childrearing practices, as this serves as a point of comparison for discussions in Chapter

5. The remaining three chapters are organized according to spheres of activity: school activities in general (Chapter 5), within lessons (Chapter 6), according to specific subject areas (Chapter 7) and lastly, teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards local cultures and Indigenous knowledges (Chapter 8).

I begin my presentation of the data by describing the ways in which cultures are implicitly present within the activities of the school grounds in Chapter 5. In this chapter, I focus on how a common Senegalese culture permeates all levels of interactions. As part of this investigation, I explore the influence of Islam on the school grounds, as well as the role of corporal punishment as a classroom management strategy. One of the more compelling findings issuing from this dissertation is found here, as I argue that incorporating beatings may represent a practice borrowed from Senegalese culture. In general, this chapter provides a rich description of the school that serves as the focus of this study. It specifies the context for understanding and/or questioning the literature that portrays the culture of schooling as alien to students' realities.

From here, I focus more closely on lessons in Chapter 6, providing an introduction to the new *Curriculum* and how it prompts including and discussing students' cultures and home realities. One of the findings presented is a deep-set belief shared by many teachers that cultural relevancy is part of their professional obligation to students. I also further investigate language policies and the actual use of the Wolof language within classrooms. This exploration provides evidence that national languages may play a more prominent role than previously documented, even in spite of French being the official LOI. These findings suggest openings for greater incorporation of national languages within teaching practices. Chapter 7 is an extension of Chapter 6,

exploring comprehensively how various school subjects either invite or impede including cultural references and Indigenous knowledges. Most significantly, religious instruction provides compelling evidence of an adaptation of schooling structures and content that diverges from the French model. This chapter also illustrates additional points of commonality and junctions as compared to the literature.

Chapter 8 serves as the final data chapter, building upon observations in previous chapters and focusing expressly on how teachers serve as both cultural reinforcers and knowledge gatekeepers. In many ways, teachers see their roles at school as an extension of their roles as mothers and fathers within their own families. At school, they make concerted efforts to expose students to what they consider to be moral and proper behaviors, including those emerging from a common Senegalese culture and Muslim practices. At the same time, I provide evidence teachers simultaneously challenging local cultures in ways that marginalize it and invalidate those who ascribe to those practices. They do so within their classroom interactions but also in their discussions with students and families outside of the school's gates.

The last chapter, Chapter 9, serves as a conclusion, in which I provide a final synthesis of this study's findings. This chapter includes a summary of promising practices of integrating students' cultures and Indigenous knowledges within their schooling experiences, as well as identifying challenges and areas for growth. I also indicate a number of possibilities for future research. I conclude the dissertation with final reflections as to the significance of this study for the research on Senegalese schooling, and African educational experience more broadly, as well as for the field of comparative and international education at large.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND GUIDING LITERATURE

The situation of Senegal's education system, and at the school that serves as research-site for this study in particular, is best understood within context. This context includes cultural influences (Chapters 4 and 5) and the history of curriculum reform and language policies (Chapter 6). In addition, the overarching theoretical concepts and relevant literatures further provide valuable scaffolding for the arguments that emerge from analysis of data collected. In this chapter, I review these concepts, beginning first with the lens of investigation, which lies within post-modern, post-structural and post-colonial perspectives. I next proceed to clarify the concepts of culture and Indigenous knowledge before further exploration into the literature. These statements, adapted to the realities of the research site, provide insight into my utilization of these terms and lay the foundation for the subsequent chapters.

I then present the literature on Indigenous knowledges and culturally relevant pedagogy as two fields that contribute greatly to questions of how cultures relate to schooling. Research on language issues and curricular reform, although not exhaustively reviewed here, further buttress these contributions. Once I have presented these concepts, I move on to a brief presentation of promising practices of integrating cultures and Indigenous knowledges within schooling. I also identify the obstacles that often render such integration difficult. I now begin by describing the lenses that frame this study.

Lenses of Analysis: Emphasizing Multiple Meanings

The perspectives that frame this study of how culture may be integrated into schooling identify as post-modern, post-structural, and post-colonial. These perspectives guide the study, from its design throughout the analysis. All three lenses stress multiple voices and acknowledge the importance of imbalances of power in shaping interactions and ascribing meanings. The nature of both post-modernism and post-structuralism are highly intertwined and debated (Rust, 1991; Surber, 1998; Barker, 2003). The term post-structuralism refers to a variety of approaches to literature, philosophy, and other disciplines that came to prominence in the 1960s in reaction to the rigidity of structuralism. The central belief of post-structuralism is the capacity of language to have multiple meanings (Booker, 1996). Similarly, a post-modernism lens emphasizes that social and historical configurations render the nature of "truth" contextual and thus, dismiss the possibility of universals or metanarratives. From this perspective, knowledge and epistemology are acculturalized and dependent upon the socio-historical and linguistic specificities of a place or culture (Barker, 2003). Both overlapping perspectives of post-structuralism and post-modernism stress the situated nature of cultural practices and knowledges and the existence of multiple voices, realities, truths, and power relationships within discourse (Rust, 1991; Surber, 1998; Barker, 2003). The term *discourse* refers to the way that a concept is discussed and the meaning that is given to it within a particular domain (adapted from Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

A post-colonial lens of analysis builds from this critical framework to acknowledge historical colonial influences and legacies, as well as the contemporary exertions of powerful countries on those less powerful, which are often referred to as

neo-colonial pressures. Often times, historical colonial legacies need to be taken into account to understand the various influences that contribute to present-day realities. As such, modern-day imperialism is a prominent theme within post-colonial discourse and takes into account political, economic, social, and cultural pressures, including shifts in market flows, the rise of transnational corporations, globalization, and development efforts (Said, 1993; Vavrus, 2003; Tikkly, 2004; Tikkly & Bond, 2013). Post-colonial theory, like post-structuralism and post-modernism, recognizes the heterogeneity of knowledges, the co-existence of various ways of thinking, and cultural validity (Aikenhead & Ogawa, 2007). Moreover, the ability of people on the margins to influence discourse and offer alternatives to development is a central theme within post-colonial theory (Briggs & Sharp, 2004; Spivak, 2006). For this study, the influence of French colonialism on the Senegalese educational system as well as resulting attitudes towards education will be key themes related to post-colonial theory. These three theories (post-modernism, post-structuralism, and post-colonialism) all emphasize multiple voices and heterogeneity. These align with underlying assumptions of this dissertation.

Grounded in these theories, the discourse on Indigenous knowledges provides both a theoretical and practical framework for understanding the relationship between culture and education, as well as how certain knowledges are privileged while others are marginalized. While I will provide a more comprehensive definition of Indigenous knowledge below, here I emphasize that I employ the term "indigenous" to refer to African voices and sensibilities in contrast to more Western-centered ones. Depending on the focus of analysis, indigenous may also mean "Senegalese," or "Lebou," for example. In general, the literature on Indigenous knowledges aligns with the above theories in

recognizing knowledge as contingent, partial, and pluralistic. The discourse on Indigenous knowledges criticizes essentialism in favor of a more complex understanding of lived experiences (Dei, 2000b). Accordingly, all knowledges are situated in time and place and have roots in socio-political contexts (Giroux, 1992; Roberts, 1998; Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2000; Christie, 2006), in which actors in power exert control over what knowledge is and what and how it is disseminated (Odora Hoppers, 2000). The pluralistic nature of knowledges recognizes the great interaction between knowledge systems (Dei, 2008) and creates an opening for an approach to education that incorporates the various backgrounds and experiences of all learners. This perspective also recognizes the tendency for some knowledges to become "fetishized" or "sedimented," thus perceived as truth (Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2000; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Such ideas reflect Foucaultian notions about how knowledges are ascribed power and compete with and supplant each other throughout history (Danaher, Shirato & Webb, 2000). As such, this dissertation's investigation of cultural references and Indigenous knowledges within schooling centers people's underlying assumptions of what schooling looks like and which voices and knowledges most prominently contribute to educational discourses.

Lastly, two additional theories accompany post-modern, post-structural and post-colonial theories in regards to education and make a call to action to center Indigenous cultures and knowledges. These two theories are decolonizing methodologies and anticolonial theory. While there is much overlap between the two theories, I understand decolonization as the process through which Indigenous peoples reassert their humanity and the value of their knowledges and traditions (see Ngũgĩ, 1993; Smith, 1999; Macedo, 1999; Fanon, 2004). From this perspective, people assert themselves as "being capable of

creating history, knowledge and society" (Smith, 1999, p. 26) and "humanize the meaning and usefulness of indigeneity" (Macedo, 1999, p. xv). Decolonization, in other words, then, is the conscious effort to slough off unwanted imposed influences while validating cultures and Indigenous knowledges that have previously been marginalized by hegemonic power. Similarly, anticolonial analysis questions institutional power and privilege and how "legitimate knowledge" is produced Dei (2000, 2010). It brings into focus the domestication or internalization of colonialism and the difficulty – even incapacity – for people to recognize and challenge it (Dei, 2010). To illustrate using an example from the field of education, an anticolonial lens identifies the roles that schools play in maintaining inequalities and "problematizes the marginalization of certain voices and ideas in the school system; as well as the delegitimization of the knowledge and experience of certain groups" (Dei, 2000a, p. 42). Indigenous scholars further demonstrate an anticolonial perspective when they argue that even the discourse on Indigenous knowledges remains couched within Western terms (Ntuli, 2005; Nakata, 2007).

Both decolonization and anticolonial theories provide important critiques to post-colonialism, while at the same time, they can also be understood as having their grounding within post-colonialism. Major critiques include 1) a challenge to the suffix "post," recognizing the continual oppression and exploitation present in modern-day imperialism[4] (Smith, 1999; Quist, 2001; Dei, 2010; Tikkly & Bond, 2013); 2) arguments that post-colonial theory ascribes power and legitimacy according to Western definitions and positions, such as current borders, historical periods centered around Western efforts

[4] Quist (2001) proposes the term "postcolonial" without the hyphen as a well of softening the chronological break indicated by the prefix post-.

(Dei, 2010); and 3) objections that post-colonialism provides a platform for the non-Indigenous to speak about Indigenous people (Smith, 1999; Nakata, 2007). Proponents argue that decolonizing methodologies (Ngũgĩ, 1993; Smith, 1999; Fanon, 2004) and anticolonial approaches (Dei, 2000a, 2000b, 2010) are alternatives that relocate the center of analysis to Indigenous spaces using Indigenous terms. Bearing these critiques in mind, this present study will explore how current practices at this school may provide possibilities for decolonizing and anticolonial perspectives and discussions.

Framing concepts: Culture, Indigenous Knowledges & Relevancy

While this study looks at both cultures and Indigenous knowledges, the discourse on Indigenous knowledges makes the most significant contribution to establishing a framework for analysis. It also establishes a political agenda for change within the field of international education. At the same time, writings on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, emanating from the United States, articulate the significance of cultural relevancy to learning and provide considerations and pedagogical strategies for implementation. Coupled together, these bodies of scholarship offers insights into what culturally relevant approaches to integrating cultures and their inherent Indigenous knowledges might look like in classrooms within African contexts. I will return to a discussion of promising practices and obstacles below. Before delving into the concept and literature on Indigenous knowledges and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, I pause here to clarify how I use the concept of culture within this study.

Culture

The word *culture* strikes an innate chord with most people, but its definition is often difficult to articulate. Indeed, much anthropological literature is devoted to studying various definitions of culture and how the concept has evolved with other developments in social thought (see Rosaldo, 1993; Ortner, 1997, 2006). For the purposes of this study, I understand culture as an overarching category for the ways in which people understand and interact with their environments, invisible and tangible. Culture establishes norms and taboos, and refers to domains such as relationships, social etiquette and manifestations, language and inherent concepts and assumptions, religious beliefs and expressions, customs, traditions, artistic practices and productions, etc. Rosaldo (1993) writes that culture "encompasses the everyday and the esoteric, the mundane and the elevated, the ridiculous and the sublime" (p. 26). Moreover, Geertz is largely credited with having moved anthropology away from classical understandings of culture as system, to a more nuanced concept of "webs of meaning" (Geertz, 1973; Rosaldo, 1993; Ortner, 1997). This concept is semiotic in nature, relying on interpretations of interpretations (Geertz, 1973).

Geertz's concept remains current and aligns with the theoretical framework above emphasizing multiple voices and realities. Building on Geertz's work, Rosaldo (1993), in particular, writes how cultures may express conflicting internal ideologies and may no longer be understood as homogenous. He also focuses on the overlap between cultures and the impossibility of identifying discrete cultural boundaries. Rather, he writes that the in-between spaces of cultural criss-cross represent "sites of creative cultural production" and areas for intriguing research (Rosaldo, 1993, p. 208). As I will investigate in this

dissertation, a school setting in Senegal may often epitomize multiple overlapping cultures. People navigate within these multiple cultures simultaneously and often subconsciously. In response, much of my writing about this topic will refer to the plural "cultures," in recognition and as a reminder of that layering.

Understanding Cultures within this Study

Multiple cultural layers may include people's religious affiliation, ethnic group of origin, newer urban identities resulting from population shifts and Wolofization, as well as a common thread of Senegalese culture. The concept of Wolofization, developed by historians as well as linguistics, describes how the Wolof language and its culture have been gaining in prominence in Senegal since French colonization. In many instances, the Wolof language has spread beyond the boundaries of ethnic Wolof people to become a lingua franca. To illustrate, certain estimates place the percentage of people speaking Wolof in Senegal as either a first (L1) or second language (L2) at over 85% of inhabitants while the Wolof ethnic group represents less than 45% of the overall population (Diallo, 2010, p. 19). Swigart (1994) and McLaughlin (2001) both argue that within urban contexts, there has been a further development in which a new urban register of Wolof has emerged, replete with French borrowings and with a less exacting linguistic structure. For many urban dwellers, speaking Wolof has also become synonymous with their ethnic identity; in which case, it seems that being Wolof represents for many a "de-ethnicized category" (McLaughlin, 2001, p. 170)[5]. Being a Wolof-speaker, then, - even a native

[5] To further illustrate, I provide the example of my husband who was born and grew up in Dakar. His mother was ethnically Lebou, having been raised in both Rufisque and Dakar. His father had Sereer origins, but grew up in the Lebou town of Yoff on the Dakar

speaker - does not necessarily denote Wolof ethnic origin. Cruise O'Brien (2003) goes even further to cautiously examine the possibility that a Wolof identity may someday represent a shared nationhood among the many peoples that contribute to the Senegalese population. Multiple factors contribute to this shared identity and culture, including religion; migration; media and pop culture, which are dominated by Wolof pop singers, journalists, etc.; trade, and the use of Wolof within official and administrative settings (Swigart, 1994; McLaughlin, 2001; Cruise O'Brien, 2003; Diallo, 2010). While many people may ascribe to a shared identity, given the pluralistic lens of this study, identities are not mutually exclusive. People may simultaneously exert other identities, related to other ethnic origins, religion, etc.

With these influences and flows cited above in mind, it may be possible to speak of a "Senegalese culture," which represents the amalgamation of many shared cultural aspects that are common among the ethnic groups within Senegal's borders. In many ways, this Senegalese culture represents the least common denominator of the many ethnic group cultures that make up the Senegalese state. As I will explore in later chapters, multiple research participants often confirmed shared cultural elements despite their diverse ethnic backgrounds. While I acknowledge the tensions resulting from the pronouncement of a "Senegalese" culture, and resistance that may come especially from people identifying with non-Wolof origins, namely Pulaars, Sereers, as well as the

---

peninsula. It is unclear at what point individuals in his family stopped speaking Sereer. When asked about his ethnicity, my husband will say he is Wolof. If pressed, he may also identify as *Sereer gàlli,* the second term being a Wolof term used often by urban dwellers that signals deracination, and cultural and linguistic separation (McLaughlin, 2008, p. 156). Like Alfa, my research associate, whose mother is Sossé, both my husband and Alfa only speak Wolof. I include here Alfa's example, as he grew up in a large rural town rather than what one might typically understand to be an "urban" area. This further underlines the extent of Wolofization beyond the nation's capital of Dakar.

numerous ethnic groups that have their origins in the Casamance (see Cruise O'Brien, 2003; Diallo, 2010), exploring the hegemonic and damaging nature of Wolofization is beyond the scope of this current study. Rather, I argue that the notion of a "Senegalese" culture allows for movement towards a more culturally relevant schooling experience. While scholars identify the reach of Wolofization even within the most remote rural and ethnically homogenous areas of Senegal, for this study, I concentrate on a Lebou traditional village that has welcomed ethnically diverse newcomers taking advantage of Dakar's sprawling opportunities. During discussions with research participants, I used the following words to approach the concept of culture: *thiossane* (Wolof for "culture" and/or "tradition"), *les realités du milieu,* and *le savoir local*. This last phrase most closely approximated the concept of Indigenous knowledges, noting that the direct translation, *le savoir indigène*, maintains pejorative connotations associated with French colonization. I will continue to explore expressions of cultures in the chapters that follow. Next, I turn to the discourse on Indigenous knowledges.

Indigenous Knowledges

The concept of Indigenous knowledges is complex and contested, and in many ways, unites both theory and practice. Distilling the literature on Indigenous knowledges is an ambitious exercise for many reasons, notwithstanding that the pertinent literature spans the globe. For the purposes of this study, while I have drawn principally from the literature concerning several countries in Africa, complementary scholarship from New Zealand, Australia, and North America (with particular emphasis on Alaska and Hawaii) also provides valuable insights. Much of the literature on Indigenous knowledges

concentrates on how to define Indigenous knowledge as a concept (see Purcell, 1998; Semali & Kincheloe, 1999; Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2000; Christie, 2006; and Sillitoe & Marzano, 2007; among others). For the purposes of this dissertation, I hold that Indigenous knowledges are elements of culture that reveal an understanding of the environment and a related set of processes allowing possessors of that knowledge to act and manipulate that environment. They also tend to be specific to a particular group of people and be distinct from more Western-based skills and actions. In many ways, these are more discrete pieces of information about processes that can be conveyed to others than perhaps the more subtle and intuitive aspects of culture. In other words, Indigenous knowledges have a distinctively functional component (Purcell, 1998). Table 1 synthesizes characteristics common to Indigenous knowledges within the literature.

Table 2.1: Main Characteristics of Indigenous knowledges

Characteristic	Description
Grounded in time and place	Indigenous knowledges have developed over an extended period of time and in a particular location. Place is frequently a reference to "local," a fixed geographic area, a "fixed territorial space" (Fernando, 2003) or an "integral indigenous territory" (Viergever, 1999).
Community focused	Indigenous knowledges are of a communitarian or collective nature and belong to an identifiable group of people. Cultural history informs Indigenous knowledges. Collective values elicit and define individual values as well as responsibilities to the community. It follows that learning is highly interactive.
Daily nature	Indigenous knowledges inform daily experiences, interactions, and activities throughout the expanse of one's lifetime. They represent a way of life and incorporate mental constructs necessary to make sense of the world and resolve problems.
Oral transmission	In addition to the contents of African written scripts that existed well before contact with Arabs or Northern powers (Zulu, 2006), oral histories and passage of information remain a key attribute of Indigenous knowledges. Some oral forms of knowledge include stories, proverbs, and sayings. They serve as an anchor for traditions and help to connect generations.
Intergenerational transmission	The passage of Indigenous knowledges is from elders to youth, with elders identified and respected as the keepers and teachers of knowledge. Whether knowledge can pass from youth to elder is an issue of contestation.
Relational	Relationships among humans and between humans and the environment are central attributes of Indigenous knowledges. Indigenous knowledges sustain relationships between individuals as

	well as within the natural world.
Dynamic nature	Indigenous knowledges are constantly changing and adapting. They do not exist in a vacuum but take influence from and contribute to other knowledge forms and available resources, including Western knowledges. Their dynamism is also the source of their survival and longevity.
Complex and holistic	A holistic approach takes stock of and addresses all the various influences that affect individuals and communities concurrently rather than compartmentalizing. Religion, spirituality, and morality are key components of the overarching Indigenous knowledges that frame a group's worldview. This includes a respect for the universe and an assumption of interconnectivity among people and their surroundings. Ways of knowing are multisensory and may include activities that may venture into the realm of the spiritual. Indigenous knowledges also link to other knowledges, including Western knowledges.
Diverse and heterogeneous	Adherence to, understanding and perceptions of Indigenous knowledges differ amongst members of the community. Knowledge is specialized among certain sub-groups or classes, and in the form of technical knowledge for skilled workers. Diversity is due to many factors including gender, age, class, occupation, urban/rural setting, agenda and power. Learning Indigenous knowledges necessitates learning from multiple experts.
Experiential and practical	Learning of Indigenous knowledges occurs through experiential means including observation, apprenticeship, and participation. Most of the content of Indigenous knowledges has real-life application and is the result of problem solving. This highly practical nature is the source of its validity, on many occasions, having withstood the test of time.

In this study, I will explore Lebou Indigenous knowledges in greatest detail. As illustration, I identify activities such as fishing and *ndeup* healing practices as Indigenous knowledges unique to Lebous. In some cases, however, as an example from Chapter 5 demonstrates, in which a Sereer teacher asks her diverse class about a particular healing plant, even Indigenous knowledges may be common among cultures. While I identify Indigenous knowledges as a sub-category of culture, the distinction is obviously a complex one and blurry at times. As Purcell (1998) points out, for instance, there are elements of a culture that when providing a function for a group to respond to its environment, may also be considered as Indigenous knowledges. Given the difficulty of definition and their inherent overlap, it is no surprise that within the literature, the two terms, culture and Indigenous knowledge, are often used interchangeably.

Nonetheless, utilizing the term, Indigenous knowledge, has much to offer to the field of international education. By using the term Indigenous knowledge, scholarship makes a political stance to promote a veritable body of thought, placing it alongside other traditions of knowledge, for instance, Western science. In this way, Indigenous knowledge escapes from the more pushed-aside soft preconceptions of culture. Moreover, scholars who articulate Indigenous knowledges attempt to broach the power dynamics innate to knowledges that I discussed above.

According to the literature, the term "Indigenous" is a concept whose meaning varies across the globe (Odora Hoppers, 2009). For further clarification, McKinley (2007) identifies four categories of people who may be described as Indigenous: 1) those who are numerically inferior to a majority group (e.g., Native Americans); 2) those living in Third World Contexts where white settlers were never a majority but had great influence through institutions and the imposition of language (e.g., populations of many post-colonial contexts in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere); 3) those who claim indigeneity but are not recognized in the countries where they live (e.g., the Ainu in Japan); and 4) those without a homeland (e.g., the Hmong) (p. 203). Of these, the term most often refers to the first category of people who are numerically inferior, such as McKinley's (2007) examples of the First Nations, Inuit, Native American, and Maori. However, the second category is most relevant to Senegal's current situation, where colonizers are no longer physically present but post-colonial pressures remain.

Building on McKinley's (2007) assertions above, the term "Indigenous," then, applies to groups who find themselves in positions of oppression, marginalization, and powerlessness (Purcell, 1998; Smith, 1999; McKinley, 2007). Indigenous knowledges

include forms of knowledge that are not recognized by hegemonic Western knowledge and "ha[ve] come to signify a methodology, a social science perspective, and even philosophical and ideological position" (Purcell, 1998, p. 258). In this way, qualifying various local knowledges within Senegal as "Indigenous," particularly in regards to school knowledges, recognizes the marginal position of knowledges of more African origin while marking them as distinct from Western knowledges. Note that in order to urge equal emphasis for both concepts, I employ the capital "I" and "W" for Indigenous and Western knowledges in this paper. Moreover, the complexity of Indigenous knowledges also acknowledges the flow between knowledges, including Indigenous and Western knowledges.

Additionally, given Wolofization vectors, I would be remiss if I did not problematize identifying a shared Senegalese or Wolof culture as "Indigenous," when in many ways, these cultures dominate other ethnic cultures in Senegal (Cruise O'Brien, 2003; Diallo, 2010). In doing so, they also become hegemonic. While this presents a dilemma, for the sake of this current study, I will nonetheless categorize both Senegalese and Wolof cultures as Indigenous. This allows exploration of opportunities for schooling to move away from a more Western-focused curriculum.

Distinguishing Western and Indigenous knowledges

The relationship between Indigenous and Western is nuanced and complex, as evidenced from the volume of arguments that explore the dynamic between Indigenous and Western knowledges within the literature. I understand Western knowledges to assert several key characteristics that differentiate them from Indigenous knowledges. These include privileging generalizability over the local; a disassociation of the knower from

the known (Glasson et al., 2010); a dichotomy between the mind and body; an assumption that nature can be known (Aikenhead & Ogawa, 2007); an emphasis on competition, individual rights, and ownership (Fatnowna & Pickett, 2002); and a focus on the "how" (Barnhart & Kawagley, 2005). I also judge the terms "Western science," "science," "Western Modern Science," "global knowledge," and "international knowledge" generally to be synonymous with "Western knowledges."

Very often, dichotomies are used to articulate existing tensions, framing them in oppositions that include traditional vs. modern, Western vs. Indigenous, and local vs. global. There is much debate as to the appropriateness – even the possibility – of dichotomies, and I would argue that in their daily lives, people call upon various knowledges interchangeably and oftentimes unconsciously in ways that transcend such opposition. As I have described above, the same is true for cultures. Multiple voices from the literature also challenge dichotomies, noting that pure distinction is logically impossible (Agrawal, 1995, 2002). Others assert that there are many similarities between Indigenous and Western knowledges, which blur possibilities for polarity (Purcell, 1998; Roberts, 1998; Dei, 2000a; Battiste, 2002; Aikenhead & Ogawa, 2007; Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). Moreover, others more generally criticize the reductionist nature of dichotomies (Giroux, 1992; Macedo, 1999).

Bearing in mind the above arguments, for the purpose of this study, I utilize Indigenous/Western labels as anchoring points in order to characterize the relevancy of classroom activities to students' realities. This assertion aligns with arguments that support the Indigenous/Western dichotomy for its communicative properties (Aikenhead & Ogawa (2007), opportunities for critical thinking (Tema, 2002; Taylor, 2008), and

purposeful analytical contrast (Purcell, 1998). Claiming Indigeneity in opposition to Western also makes an attempt to rectify a historic power imbalance.

Now that I have explored concepts of culture and Indigenous knowledge and clarified my application of these terms, I next turn to the body of literature on culturally relevant pedagogy. Again, this literature identifies the benefits of educational experiences that address students' realities and articulates considerations and strategies for implementing culturally relevant education. In this way, the literature on culturally relevant pedagogy complements the work that has been done within the field of Indigenous knowledges.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The literature on Indigenous knowledges along with critiques of current forms of formal education in African contexts urge for greater Africanization of the curriculum. Complementing this body of scholarship, the literature on culturally relevant pedagogy provides a more clearly articulated rationale as well as strategies for incorporating cultures and, more specifically, Indigenous knowledges, in a purposeful and deliberate manner within the classroom. A notion central to multicultural education in the United States, culturally relevant education focuses on connecting school learning with home learning in order to validate learners, connect with communities, and promote strong learning outcomes. According to one American educational scholar, culturally relevant education is “just good teaching!” (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, title). Arguing that education within the United States has a strong and often invisible European heritage, proponents argue that ethnically diverse students have greater difficulties in accessing lesson material

and being successful students. Considerations for adapting strategies include attention to students' discourse patterns, communication preferences, collaborative or individual work tendencies, and learning styles (Gay, 2010).

The attraction of culturally relevant pedagogy as a concept and its applicability to contexts beyond the United States have also been remarked by several non-American Indigenous authors such as Dei (2000, 2008), Odora-Hoppers (2009b), and McKinley (2007)[6]. These scholars identify culturally relevant pedagogy as integral to creating space for Indigenous knowledges within schooling. Moreover, multicultural literature from the United States makes an important contribution in its emphasis on pedagogical strategy largely absent in the general literature on Indigenous knowledge and education. I return to examples of cultural considerations and strategies in the next section.

Support for culturally relevant education among American and international Indigenous authors stresses its potential contribution to improving schooling experiences and outcomes for students. Referring to multicultural education experiences in the U.S., Ladson-Billings (1995b) argues that culturally relevant pedagogy has resulted in higher levels of success on standardized tests and "demonstrated achievements too numerous to list" (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 475). Similarly, Gay (2010) states that

> even curricula with minimum cultural content improve student achievement, according to a variety of indicators, across ethnic groups, grade levels, and subject or skill areas. The multiple achievement effects include higher scores on standardized tests, higher grade point averages, improved student self-concepts and self-confidence, and greater varieties and levels of student engagement with subject matter (p. 173).

[6] Dei is originally from Ghana working in Canada, while Odora-Hoppers originates from and works in South Africa, and McKinley is Maori from New Zealand.

Indigenous voices extend the argument of the benefits of culturally relevant education to international contexts. They cite a number of attributes, including that at its most basic level, culturally relevant education aligns with a constructivist perspective that emphasizes building on prior knowledge and experiences (Dei, 2000a; Jegede, 1997, 1999; Semali, 1999; Battiste, 2002; Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). Furthermore, integrating Indigenous knowledges within the classroom challenges Western hegemony, fosters social change, models the importance of a plurality of knowledges, and empowers students and their communities (Dei, 2004). Schooling that is personalized, subjective, local, and spiritual may more successfully engage African learners (Dei, 2002), leading to a sense of ownership and interest among students (Semali, 1999). Lastly, students who experience culturally relevant learning become more self-directed and politically active, responsive to tribal elders, and positive influences in their communities (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011).

Although the concept of cultural relevancy as espoused in multicultural educational literature in the United States might be interpreted as another Western imposition in African contexts, I argue that the heart of culturally relevant education is the peeling away of imposed educational forms and content in all contexts – American or otherwise – and that it has much promise for interrupting the negative effects of inappropriate schooling forms. As I shall demonstrate in the next section, the literature on culturally relevant pedagogy further complements the literature on Indigenous knowledges in education by providing insights into how institutionalized formal learning may be better adapted to the needs of African learners. Although there are certainly explicit writings about African traditional educational practices and philosophies

(Moumouni, 1968; Diallo, 2003; Higgs, 2008; Abdi, 2013), few go so far as to make recommendations of how African educational traditions and approaches may enhance formal education in practice. Rather, this is an area where the scholarship on Indigenous knowledges and culturally relevant pedagogy can make a significant contribution. In the next section, I draw from diverse literatures in order to provide insights about promising practices and challenges to integrating local cultures and Indigenous knowledges within formal schooling.

Towards More Africanized Curricular Reform

A close review of the literature on Indigenous knowledges and education reveals that there are few studies that have systematically explored the role of cultures and Indigenous knowledges within African classrooms. I provide an overview of those studies later in this section. However, given the paucity of information, I turned to related larger bodies of scholarship including the worldwide literature on Indigenous knowledges, writings on African educational traditions, culturally relevant education resources, as well as scholarship and publications pertaining to and promoting multilingual education and curricular reform. In this section, I provide an overview of the insights that these sources provide and identify gaps within that literature where this present study may contribute.

African Education and Learning Tendencies & Strengths

To begin, the scholarship on African education identifies multiple ways that African traditions of education may serve as rich resources for identifying content and pedagogical strategies that may contribute to narrowing the gap between home and

school cultures. Recall that home cultures may embody multiple layers including ethnic culture, Senegalese culture, religious influences, and more globalized culture. School culture most often epitomizes Western - French, in particular - influences. Here, the term "African education" refers to practices that African societies use to prepare young people for their roles as members of society. These often take place at home or within the community, in contrast to formal schooling. In general, African education is informal and lifelong, experiential (i.e., based on observation, imitation, and trial and error, as well as deliberate learning opportunities), and relies on African languages as conduits (Moumouni, 1968; Diallo, 2003). African educational strategies are also frequently polysemic and often include coded media such as the oral traditions[7] of tales, proverbs, and riddles (Moumouni, 1968; Semali, 1999; Kanu, 2006; Diame, 2011). African education also prioritizes interactive learning. Collective learning takes many forms including secret societies, initiation, mentoring, group learning, and group solutions (Wane, 2000; Ntuli, 2002; Mazonde, n.d.). The indoctrination of children into the social relationships of society (Moumouni, 1968) and preparation to be responsible community members are also central objectives of African education (Higgs, 2008; Diame, 2011). Examples from the literature illuminate how African educational content may link with formal schooling material; Table 2 below highlights several illustrations.

Table 2.2: Opportunities for integrating African educational content

Content elements	Learning highlighted
Oral traditions: storytelling, proverbs, riddles, fables, chants, jokes	Attentiveness and conversation skills (Wandira, 1971); Pre-reading skills (Okebukola, 2009); cultural norms and values; access higher levels of thinking (proverbs in particular) (Dei, 2010); history

[7] It is important to note criticism of the term “oral tradition.” Smith (1999) asserts that the current emphasis and unquestioned value placed on literacy and writing relegates rich oral histories to the category of “oral tradition.”

Physical activity: dance, play, sports (including wrestling)	Motor skills (Wandira, 1971)
Building/construction of crafts and structures: making pots, instruments; building a hut	Geo-science (Odora Hoppers, 2009); math and physics (Tema, 2002)
Agricultural activities: seeding, fertilizing, plowing; irrigation systems; knowledge of soils and climate classifications	Calculating measurements; physics and chemistry (traction, gravity) (Quiroz, 1999); biology, natural resource management (Dei, 2010)
Home activities: measuring and distributing food; traditional stoves	Units of measurement (Quiroz, 1999); math (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions); heat transfer (Quiroz, 1999)
Traditional medicine and healing	Pharmacology, sustainable forestry (Dei, 2010), biology
Creative arts: dance, crafts, song	Creativity and sensitivity (Wandira, 1971); history
Customary laws, tribal and clan courts	Sense of community responsibility (Dei, 2010); impartiality and reasoning (Wandira, 1971)

The unique learning needs and preferences of African students are additional aspects that may affect how students react within schooling environments and might further help to identify culturally relevant materials and methods. Because a review of the literature revealed an absence of scholarship that explicitly addresses the learning preferences of African students, I draw heavily from Gay's work (2010) on descriptors of African American students in the United States and Aikenhead and Michell's (2011) general exploration of learning strengths among Indigenous students. Both sources (Gay, 2010 and Aikenhead & Michell, 2011) recognize the sensitive nature of their assertions and caution against generalization. Moreover, while recognizing the divergence in histories and present conditions for African American and African students, I maintain that Gay's observations are relevant to African realities because her observations align with the characteristics of Indigenous knowledges and African education traditions that I have presented above. With this in mind, I deduce three tendencies from the literature which align with the characteristics of Indigenous knowledges: preferences for 1) holistic and experiential learning; 2) collective, group-oriented learning; and 3) communication

styles that recognize others and seek to place messages in context. These various learning strengths and tendencies provided a starting point for my fieldwork in identifying what may be indications of Indigenous knowledges and epistemologies within the classroom. I will reflect on the relevance of this study's findings to these preferences in Chapter 9.

Integrating Cultural Relevancy and Indigenous Knowledges in Practice

In addition to these examples of African education and tendencies of African learners, the literature provides a glance into what culturally relevant education that successfully integrates Indigenous knowledges might look like in an African classroom. First and foremost, classrooms that successfully integrate Indigenous knowledges will reflect a shift in power dynamics between Western and Indigenous knowledges (Semali, 1999) and may result in transformative education (Dei, 2000a, 2000b, 2002, 2010; Odora Hoppers, 2005; Wane, 2005). Secondly, education would reflect the holism, spirituality, and complexity of Indigenous knowledges, being collaborative and multidisciplinary in nature, rather than the compartmentalization of subject matter (Taylor, 2008; Dei, 2010). In addition, scholarship also points to conditions under which Indigenous knowledges would likely contribute to an improved formal educational environment, which I have synthesized as the following. Education that meaningfully integrates Indigenous knowledges will:

- Reinforce local cultures and practices;
- Balance local relevancy with global currency;
- Foster a critical approach to education; and
- Jointly emphasize form and content.

In regards to fostering a critical approach, two additional concepts provide insights into how students may be able to address the cultural layering that they experience and how they may be able to synthesize across forms of knowledge. These concepts are 1) border crossing, and 2) the creation of the third space. *Border crossing* recognizes "the shifting borders that both undermine and reterritorialize different configurations in culture, power and knowledge" (Giroux, 1992, p. 30). Accordingly, borderlands are areas where synthesis and rearticulation can take place (Giroux, 1992; Aikenhead, 1996). The *creation of the third space* (originated by Homi Bhabha – see Rutherford, 1990) is even more prevalent in the literature (see Wallace, 2004; Taylor, 2008; Maeda, 2009; Lipka et al., 2009; Gay, 2010; Glasson et al., 2010). The third space is a discursive space in which people create a hybrid culture that is distinct from Indigenous and Western knowledges and cultures. It is ideally a co-construction and/or a negotiated meaning (Wallace, 2004; Taylor, 2008; Glasson et al., 2010). Within this space in-between, "hegemonic interpretations can be viewed as not necessarily 'correct' or 'true'" (Wallace, 2004, p. 907). Accordingly, learners create a third space or become border crossers when they make their own choices of how to conceptualize, relate to, and prioritize knowledges (Maeda, 2009).

While these conditions above pose a unique conundrum for integrating Indigenous knowledges within the formal schooling system, I would like to draw particular attention to the last condition: a dual emphasis on both the *content* and *form* of education. The latter, *form,* refers to the underlying assumptions and format of educational elements, such as the choice of didactic materials, the cultural resonance (or lack of resonance) of pedagogical strategies, and more significantly, the general

approach, ethos, and structure of schooling. Several other terms from the literature also encapsulate this notion, including educational or learning platforms and underlying African philosophies (Higgs, 2008; Abdi, 2013). To further illustrate, a scholar from Somalia, Abdi (2013), argues for a restructuring that is "not isolationist (i.e., not singularly Africanist) in these intermeshed global environments, but minimally starts with an appreciation of Africa's ways of thinking, knowing and doing" (p. 80).

At the same time, several Indigenous scholars are particularly skeptical of how Indigenous knowledges might come to be incorporated in formal schooling based on Western models. Nakata (2007) vigorously argues that, "it is not possible to bring in Indigenous knowledge and plunk it in the curriculum unproblemmatically as if it is another data set for Western knowledge to discipline and test" (p. 8). Such concerns merit reflection and underscore the need for education to promote critical thinking and help students to synthesize knowledges through techniques like border crossing and the creation of a third space. While the literature highlights numerous examples of content from African educational traditions, cultures, and heritage that may be incorporated, few studies address implementation and *how* the form of education might be adapted to more deliberately integrate Indigenous knowledges.

I now turn to a mapping of this research, examining studies related to integrating cultures and Indigenous knowledges within formal schooling. I begin with studies centering on Indigenous knowledges and then move to relevant findings from mother-tongue based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) and curriculum reform literature.

Mapping Research on Cultural Integration

The studies that document teacher attitudes towards integrating Indigenous knowledges as well as initiatives in implementation are both sparse and ambivalent. Only four relevant studies document how teachers currently approach Indigenous knowledges: a case study from Alaska (Lipka, 1991) and three studies on teacher perspectives, one from Ghana (Dei, 2000a), a second from Kenya (Gachanga, 2005), and the third from Tanzania (Semali & Mehta, 2012). Lipka's (1991) article presents a fascinating case study from Alaska of a single lesson of a Yup'ik teacher in a classroom with students from the same ethnic group. This study is unique for its thick description and analysis of how the teacher's pedagogy echoes cultural values, interests, and norms and, as a result, engages students. This case study is part of a longer 20-year study; I highlight a later study from the project below. In fact, the researcher chose this lesson because it provided insight into "its unusual, from a non-Yup'ik orientation, style and delivery" (p. 207). English is the LOI for the lesson, although the teacher and students regularly speak to each other in Yup'ik. According to the researcher, in this lesson, the teacher "reinforces Yup'ik values, emphasizing the themes of subsistence and survival, and how he organizes his classroom along principles of individual autonomy and group harmony and solidarity. His classroom is a synthesis of Yup'ik and school culture" (p. 205). This case study is significant as it provides insights into how Indigenous knowledges may seamlessly inform the nature of lesson delivery and classroom interactions, i.e., the form of education. It also provides an example of cultural relevancy within a language that is an L2 for many students, which is also the case for the Senegalese students presented in the following chapters.

Three other studies, from Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania, explore teacher habits and attitudes in relationship to Indigenous knowledges within African settings. All studies obtained their data through teacher surveys and interviews. In the first study from Ghana, Dei (2000) highlights innovative, resourceful teachers who connect to local realities in efforts to build upon students' prior knowledge. His findings include how, in a resource-lacking environment, teachers "improvise," for example, teaching sewing with cement paper, rather than costly fabric, and making local soap in science class (Dei, 2000a, p. 55). Gachanga's (2005) study from Kenya focuses on peace education and finds that more than half of the teachers are already incorporating Indigenous knowledges in the classroom. Gachanga (2005) identified the following reasons that teachers include culturally relevant material in their classrooms: 1) promoting behavioral change; 2) providing balance to curriculum; 3) filling the void left by parents who no longer teach traditional ways to their children; 4) engaging students; and 5) responding to personal beliefs in the power of Indigenous knowledges (p. 5).

In contrast, Semali and Mehta's (2012) study found that science teachers in Tanzanian secondary schools rarely incorporate Indigenous knowledges within their instruction. Findings included that teachers devalue elders' importance and knowledge, are unable to link classroom lessons to students' lives, and avoid border crossing. Investigations into teacher attitudes demonstrated that they perceive various obstacles to incorporating Indigenous knowledges, including English as the LOI, discomfort deviating from textbook lessons, and structural issues, such as big classes and lack of equipment. While the previous studies provided promising examples of teacher practices, this latter

example starkly underlines the obstacles that teachers face. I will return to these obstacles in a later section of this chapter.

In addition to teacher perspectives and attitudes, other relevant studies examine initiatives that aim to incorporate Indigenous knowledges within schooling. Only a few studies (Keane, 2008; Chikodzi & Nyota, 2010; Semali & Mehta, 2012) address African settings; the other programs focus largely on North America (Lipka & McCarty, 1994; Lipka, et al., 2009). Many feature programs that concentrate on science (Keane, 2008; Semali & Mehta, 2012) and math education (Lipka et al., 2009; Chikodzi & Nyota, 2010). For example, Semali and Mehta's (2012) study referred to above was a three-year investigation into the obstacles to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education in Tanzania's secondary schools. Their inquiry resulted in the proposal for a hybrid instructional model called iSPACES (Innovation, Science, Practicals, Application, Conceptualization, Entrepreneurship and Systems), whose goal is to "design environments and experiences that help aspiring teachers develop the understandings needed to teach in ways that are responsible and accountable to students" (p. 234). Although currently at the beginning of the implementation of that method, this study provides an important example of current practice towards more culturally relevant education within an African setting.

Similarly, Keane's (2008) study presents how, over a four-year period, a research team in South Africa composed of university-based researchers and community-based participants collaborated to "explor[e] features of a relevant science education for two schools and their community" (Keane, 2008, p. 588). In addition to teachers, parents, and students, local leaders – both traditional leaders and members of NGOs – and farmers

participated in action research activities. Teachers incorporated assignments into classroom activities that identified examples of Indigenous knowledges and provided feedback to researchers. Although political tensions contributed to one school's decision to maintain the conventional curriculum rather than integrate the research project's findings, Keane's (2008) study provides insights into strategies for materials development as well as potential obstacles to anticipate. One of the study's most significant findings is the usefulness of dialogue among community members for encouraging participation, increasing confidence, reinvigorating Indigenous knowledges, and spurring other community-based projects.

While seemingly not as systematic or long-term as these two studies, Chikodzi and Nyota's (2010) research in Zimbabwe investigated several ways that games and other cultural elements from Shona culture may be incorporated to support mathematics teaching in formal schools. Upon recommendations that teachers experiment with these activities, researchers indicated that students responded with increased classroom participation. They also found that using more local references removed the idea that mathematics is an "alien phenomenon" (Chikodzi & Nyota, 2010, p. 14).

Lastly, Lipka, Yanez, Andrew-Ihre, and Adam (2009) conducted a long-term study in Alaska that integrates multiple examples of culturally relevant education based on Indigenous knowledges. Although from Alaska, this project is noteworthy because of its duration (20 years), action-research focus, sustained work with elders, and dual attention to the content and form of education. Moreover, the authors provide insights into how more culturally relevant curriculum may positively affect learning outcomes. Implementing a quasi-experimental design, this initiative introduced Alaskan Native

Yup'ik language and culture into classroom experiences for Native and non-Native students. The project's objective was to develop curriculum and pedagogical components through comprehensive professional development activities. The new curriculum presents math in a holistic way that draws from multiple contexts and uses Yup'ik communication patterns and social relations as pedagogical strategies. To illustrate, a unit investigates parka patterns linking incorporated symbols to cultural histories and demonstrates how the curriculum teaches literacy via mathematical instruction. This holistic nature resonates with many characteristics of Indigenous knowledge presented above. The authors argue that the program succeeded in creating a *third space* in which they achieved

> an integration of Yup'ik everyday knowledge (which embeds pedagogical and mathematical knowledge) with Western math and forms of pedagogy…situating math knowledge in a context familiar to Alaska students yet novel enough and different enough from national math curriculum to most likely increase students' motivation and access to the material (Lipka et al., 2009, p. 266).

The program's focus on working with elders merits particular attention. The project hosted a number of meetings with elders over the 20-year period. Project implementers fostered opportunities for elders to selectively share their understandings; they paid attention to *how* elders conveyed knowledge. Elders often employed stories and demonstrations as teaching strategies. Examples included building kayaks, fish racks, and model smoke houses; star navigation; designing and sewing border patterns and parkas; traditional stories and games; and methods of body measurement and making shapes. Project facilitators employed a process of continual checking in and reflection through which they would develop curriculum and present it to elders for feedback and revisions (Lipka & McCarty, 1994; Lipka, 1999). Teachers came to see the elders as resources, and

elders embraced the process as an opportunity to mitigate cultural loss (Lipka et al., 2009).

While studies purposely investigating cultural relevancy are sparse, particularly within African contexts, the studies discussed above provide illustrations of both curriculum and pedagogical approaches that illuminate what Indigenous knowledges may look like within a formal classroom. They also indicate a number of challenges that arise during implementation, a topic I discuss in greater detail below. Before addressing obstacles, I acknowledge that research from related fields provides additional insights. I turn next to an exploration of that literature and its offerings.

Additional Insights from Related Literature

In addition to the studies cited above from the domains of Indigenous knowledges and culturally relevant education, scholarship from the related fields of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) and curricular reform also provide significant information necessary to framing this study of a Senegalese primary school. While I have not performed an exhaustive review of these literatures, my review suggests that this literature recognizes the intimate relationship between language and culture, and strongly advocates for greater cultural relevancy in education (Brock-Utne, 2000; Kembo-Sure, 2002; Prah, 2002; Wane, 2008; Alidou, 2009; Okebukola, 2009; Ouanze & Glanz, 2011; Babaci-Wilhite, Macleans & Lou, 2012). I provide an example to demonstrate similarities with the studies identified above. Here, I identify Panda and Mohanty's (2009) chapter on the MLE (multilingual education) Plus program with tribal communities in Orissa, India. Similar to the Keane (2008) and Chikodzi and Nyota (2010) studies, the authors describe

how action research, designed to create a bridge between home and school cultures, determined aspects of Indigenous knowledges to incorporate within the classroom. Such activities were identified through an exhaustive ethnographic survey using Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). The researchers used this technique to identify mathematical and scientific concepts, such as angle, weight, measurement, etc., and examples of how they are then applied in everyday life, for example, in clothing patterns, house construction, agricultural activities, and ways of counting.

While this example is illuminating and also has much in common with the studies cited above, the use of local language as LOI greatly distinguishes it from the realities of Senegalese public schools, in which French remains the LOI. It does, however, underscore the importance of building relationships between communities and schools, and showcases an intriguing methodology in the CHAT tool. Such an example demonstrates the overlap between the literature on Indigenous knowledges and MTB-MLE literature, as both suggest educational forms that more closely resemble students' learning strengths and realities and foster greater student achievement.

Furthermore, scholars from the field of multilingual education also point to a significant gap in the literature on African education: there are limited studies documenting classroom practice. Alidou and Brock-Utne (2011) performed a review of classroom studies in several African countries (including Benin, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, South Africa, Togo, and Tanzania) and concluded that there is a paucity of studies on teaching and instruction within African schools and communities. While the MTB-MLE literature views national languages as LOI as the medium for attaining cultural relevancy, this present study

approaches the same goals from a different angle - culturally relevant reform of current practices while maintaining French as the LOI. Although undoubtedly, instruction in students' home languages would be ideal, given current language and educational policies in Senegal (see Chapter 6), this approach is better adapted to those realities. While this study focuses on a school where French, not a national language, functions as the LOI, findings presented in Chapters 5 through 8 nonetheless demonstrate increased levels of cultural relevancy. Thus, this study responds directly to gaps in the literature (Alidou & Brock-Utne, 2011) and provides meaningful insights into current reform efforts and classroom practices.

Lastly the literature on curricular reform is particularly relevant to this present study, given the recent implementation of the new *Curriculum* within Senegalese primary schools (see Chapter 6). The literature asserts that while the histories of many African educational systems since Independence reflect attempts at curriculum reform, such reforms have been inadequate to effect real change in the established education system. Despairingly, without needed reforms, almost all current schooling systems in Africa remain framed by Western assumptions and do not make space for Indigenous knowledges and African heritage (Schafer, Ezirim, Gamurorwa, Ntsonyane, Phiri, Sagnia, Salakana, & Bairu, 2004).

Challenges to More Culturally Relevant Formal Schooling

The obstacles to curriculum reform in general are many and complex. They include political instability leading to inconsistency in policy applications; a lack of political will; constraints of donor assistance; expensive piloting; administrative planning

that is distant from local realities; and the absence of African pedagogies (Obanya, 1995; Semali, 1999). The task of incorporating Indigenous knowledges within the curriculum is particularly daunting; below, I detail five major challenges. I draw these conclusions based on the literature on Indigenous knowledges and education as well as a previous mapping of key initiatives in West Africa (Sarr, 2012).

Weak and Ineffective Policy Implementation

Lack of political will is a key factor that delays implementing more culturally relevant formal education models (Obanya, 1995; Semali, 1999). While laws and policies exist supporting a more local approach to curriculum, they are either not implemented (Gachanga, 2005) or pursued in a manner that results in shallow reforms that disappoint expectations without redress (Semali, 1999). Educational reforms in Ghana in the 1980s and 1990s serve as an example. While initiatives included the development of locally relevant and locally written texts, funding was never made available for widespread publication and dissemination (Dei, 2000a). Senegal has a similar history in regards to implementing national languages as LOI, which I address in detail in Chapter 6. This lack of political will may have many roots, including the cultivation of elites and current schooling systems founded on Western assumptions.

Unsupportive Donor Conditions

One feature of the post-colonial geo-political situation is the continued dependence of African nations on external aid and fiscal planning (Semali, 1999). Pressures from donors complicate governments' abilities to respect commitments to curriculum change as they prioritize development goals above local needs and interests

(Owuor, 2007). While Africanization efforts of curriculum began to coalescence in the 1970s, the economic downturn of the 1980s brought funding to an end (Brock-Utne, 2000). Currently funded curricular reforms focus on the addition of subject areas that address development objectives instead of fostering more culturally relevant revisions to existent subjects (Brock-Utne, 2000). Brock-Utne (2000) refers to this situation as "cultural conditionality," for not only do donors define the structure of a classroom but they also define the culture of schooling and educational experiences for many Africans. Examples include AIDS and environmental education, and an emphasis on hygiene and family planning (Brock-Utne, 2000). Such multiple pressures confound the implementation of a more African-centered curriculum.

Local Resistance

The inability to enact radical reform (Semali, 1999) that goes beyond the Western-based approach to education (Mazonde, n.d.) is also due in part to local resistance. Elites and others who value Western education are barriers to change (Mazonde, n.d.). Moreover, many students (Quiroz, 1999) and parents feel strongly that African heritage has no place within the classroom. Explanations for this perspective include colonial indoctrination, the subsequent and related internalization of development discourse, the pervasive global culture of schooling, and the overarching hegemony of Western knowledge (Escobar, 1995; Baker & Letendre, 2005; Wane, 2008; Abdi, 2013; Sarr, 2013). Because of their comparable emphasis on integrating local realities into the classroom, the experiences of local language instruction and multi-grade education initiatives may illuminate foreseeable challenges to integrating Indigenous knowledges that may arise among community stakeholders. For instance, experiments with instruction

in local languages have demonstrated parents' resistance, as many believe mother-tongue instruction to be second-class education (see Baker, 1998; Luoch & Ogutu, 2002, Quorro, 2009; Diame, 2011; Ouane & Glanz, 2011). Similarly, attempts to incorporate multi-grade approaches have met opposition, despite the emphasis on intergenerational and inter-age activities that is characteristic of African education. Successful mother-tongue instruction and multi-grade instruction initiatives will likely have had to incorporate advocacy and other strategies in order to gain parental and community support. In this manner, they may provide insights into approaches for purposefully incorporating Indigenous knowledges into schooling.

Lastly, a sense of competition between school and community may contribute to elders feeling devalued, complicating their participation in integration efforts (Semali, 1999). Moreover, a reluctance to share valuable Indigenous knowledges with educators is a significant challenge (Wane, 2000; McKinley, 2007; Dei, 2010). Communities may not want oral traditions to be included in textbooks, for instance (Dei, 2010), fearful of exploitation as well how the act of writing down information may transform the knowledge itself. Wane (2000) provides an illustration of how misconceptions and misunderstandings between educators and knowledge experts may complicate learning about Indigenous education. She describes difficulties working with Indigenous knowledge experts in her native Kenya when they assumed she was looking for Western knowledge and said they had nothing to contribute. Only after some time with Wane did they start to share and reveal their esteem for their Indigenous knowledge.

Teacher quality

Teacher quality often stands as an impediment to curricular reform. While teachers are essential to lasting change within the schooling system, they need guidance, accompaniment, and the correct tools to be effective (Obanya, 1995; Pillai, 2001; Gachanga, 2005; McKinley, 2007; Owuor, 2007; Glasson et al., 2010; Semali & Mehta, 2012). Many African teachers have inadequate training for implementing lessons relevant to African heritage. For many such individuals, it is challenging to teach beyond the textbook, implement lessons drastically different from their own experience, and deliver interdisciplinary lessons (Pillai, 2001; Semali & Mehta, 2012). An intriguing counter-point – and one that finds resonance in the experiences of alternative and non-formal educational programs – argues that teachers with lower levels of formal education may better foster the creativity conducive to curricular reform (Mkosi, 2005). This is because teachers are products themselves of the Western-based system and many have internalized its legacies, including how knowledge is approached and understood (Battiste, 2002; Owuor, 2007; Semali & Mehta, 2012). Many also demonstrate a sense of alienation from their culture (Semali, 1999). Educators also rarely critically consider issues of knowledge production when teaching and are often unable to recognize the contingent nature of Western knowledge (McKinley, 2007; Owuor, 2007). Decolonization efforts are essential for teachers to be able to appropriately present Indigenous knowledges within the formal curriculum (Owuor, 2007; Dei, 2010; Abdi, 2013).

Nation-fostering policies that place teachers among students outside of their community and ethnic group also hinder implementing culturally relevant curriculum (Easton, 2004). They complicate teachers' abilities to demonstrate an interest in students'

lives and communities, and to interact with students and their families outside of school (McKinley, 2007). Communities perceive the preferences of teachers to live in towns, rather than their assigned village postings, as signs of disinterest, confirming the inadequacies of village life (Sarr, 2013). In such a context, it will likely be impossible to implement MTB-MLE or other truly viable local strategies. A further complication is the obvious fact that many African schools lack necessary resources, already relying on teachers to regularly develop time-consuming didactic materials. As I argued above, a critical approach to knowledges is essential for integrating local cultures and Indigenous knowledges within the curriculum. Without the necessary training and preparation, teachers represent an obstacle.

Discord between Educational Systems, Cultures, and Indigenous Knowledges

Whether or not Indigenous knowledges *can* and *should* be incorporated into schooling at all remains a fundamental question. As some of the literature suggests, the tensions between Indigenous and Western knowledges may be insurmountable. The grounding of schooling in Western hegemony and the development discourse complicate integrating Indigenous knowledges (Reynar, 1999; Nakata, 2007; Owuor, 2007). Bringing Indigenous knowledges into the classroom may also bring about fundamental change, with implications for both schooling and for knowledge transfer within communities (Owuor, 2007). This may have been one of the complications in the Keane (2008) participatory research project in South Africa, as noted above. While the project produced a curriculum for integrating Indigenous knowledges within science education for two rural schools, one school rejected the curriculum, opting to continue with its conventional curriculum that had little connection to students' lived realities. This

decision reflected political tensions weary of the transformative implications of the new curriculum and the changes it represented to the status quo.

Furthermore, integrating Indigenous knowledges and related pedagogies challenges the culture of formal schooling and may risk reinforcing potentially harmful Indigenous practices. For example, much of the literature on culturally relevant pedagogy stresses a learner-centered approach that contradicts both the formal schooling model in many African countries and key African educational concepts. Also, African traditions of knowledge transfer from elder to younger and by gender are strategies that more readily support banking education models and may threaten advancements in gender parity (Owuor, 2007). Furthermore, corporal punishment may be a disciplinary tactic well supported at home and one that teachers may perceive as translating easily into the classroom. I will explore this example in greater detail in Chapter 6. Although a clear policy on which normative behaviors should be incorporated into formal schooling is beyond the scope of this dissertation, this concern necessitates further reflection.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to provide both the theoretical framework and thematic background necessary for contextualizing the present study of one Senegalese school. I began by asserting the importance of recognizing and assuming multiple meanings and voices, as is supported by post-modernism, post-structuralism and post-colonial theories. Using this flexible and comprehensive lens of analysis will allow for discussion of participants' multiple and co-existing cultures that influence schooling experiences. Based within this theoretical housing, I then described in detail my

understanding of the foundational concepts of culture and Indigenous knowledges. As I explained above, culture may be perceived as all-encompassing and refers to webs of meaning that animate peoples' lives. Cultures may be layered, and there is much to gain from studying areas of criss-cross. Within cultures, one may also discern Indigenous knowledges, which, although there may be considerable overlap with the concept of culture, refer more specifically to bodies of knowledge that serve particular functions in how people interact with one another and their environment. Often times, Indigenous knowledges are closely linked with a particular ethnic group, but not always. I provided several examples of Indigenous knowledges that are applicable to this current study, including oral literature, healing practices, and livelihood activities, such as fishing. In addition, scholarship on culturally relevant pedagogy from the United States complements the expanding literature on Indigenous knowledges, by offering tangible considerations and strategies for implementation.

The second portion of this chapter concentrates on questions of implementation, and I provided illustrations not only from the literature on Indigenous knowledges and culturally relevant pedagogy, but also from the fields of mother-tongue based multilingual education and curriculum reform. While sparse, several studies on integrating Indigenous knowledges, including some from African contexts, provide insights into both promising practices as well as the obstacles that surround integrating cultures and Indigenous knowledges in order to achieve greater relevancy and improved student achievement. In the chapter that follows, I outline my research methods and the design choices that provide further framework to this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This chapter presents the research design and various methods used in conducting this study. As such, I explore the choice and characteristics of the overarching compressed ethnographic research design. In addition, much of this chapter closely documents my activities on site and the primary and secondary methods of data collection that I employed. Part of this discussion describes my decision to collaborate with a research associate as well as how I determined research participants. Subsequently, I address procedures for data management and analysis leading up to this final dissertation. Lastly, I examine ethical issues that arose throughout the research process and how I negotiated an ethical approach within the environment specific to this study.

As will become even more apparent in later data chapters, the intention of my writing is to provide a thick description, which allows the reader to see the raw data and to provide his/her own interpretation. Such an approach reinforces the soundness of this study (Cho & Trent, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). This includes sharing the various complications that arose as well as the decisions I made to address these challenges. Such detail allows others to understand the thought and logic behind how research unfolds (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Furthermore, being clear about the perspective of the project and its boundaries and assumptions (Rossman & Rallis, 2012) as well as my own researcher's bias also reinforce the strength of this study. With this in mind, I include a biographical statement towards the end of this chapter. I now turn to the first section of this chapter and describe the compressed ethnographic approach that guided my work.

Compressed Ethnography: An Overview

This study utilizes a compressed ethnographic approach that takes advantage of multiple data gathering techniques, including participant observation, interviews, focus groups, and the use of photographs, video, and audio recordings. Compressed ethnographies are particularly valuable when conducting small-scale research (Knight, 2002) because this type of research involves one or few researchers, restricted or no funding, and limited time in the field (Rossman, Blanco & Sarr, 2013). Furthermore, compressed ethnography is a technique common to applied research and one that is "both promising and methodologically innovative" (Knoblauch, 2005, p. 5; Rossman et al., 2013). While resources articulating this overall approach are sparse, compressed ethnography is regarded as particularly generative and seems to be gaining traction in educational research (Rossman et al., 2013). Terms such as "rapid assessments" and "focused ethnographies" also articulate designs synonymous with compressed ethnographies (Knoblauch, 2005; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Compressed ethnographies also exhibit certain characteristics that distinguish them from other forms of research: 1) the researcher is familiar with the site and topic of inquiry, 2) study focuses on one particular cultural aspect, and 3) local experts are often called upon as collaborators (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). I will return to how this study fulfills these criteria below.

Factors that led me to choose a compressed ethnographic design included its resonance with my conceptual framework, its capacity for providing rich and nuanced information, and the timeframe available to me for on-site data collection. In regards to my conceptual framework, compressed ethnography falls within the research genre of

qualitative methods, which holds the assumptions that knowledge is contingent, partial, and pluralistic (see Schram, 2006; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). This approach thus echoes post-structural and post-modernist assertions and allows for multiple voices and interpretations to surface and co-exist. This multiplicity will be evidenced in later data chapters.

Secondly, ethnographies encourage detailed descriptions and close engagement with research participants, qualities commensurate with my investigation of cultural issues and school experiences, my own preferences, and good qualitative research practices. Ethnographic techniques developed from the fields of cultural anthropology and qualitative sociology and emphasize the need to seek and understand emic (or insider) views (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). They are considered a major method of educational research, allowing researchers to join research participants and "enter their world and gain an understanding of their lives" (Walford, 2004, p. viii). Indeed one of the strengths of ethnographic methods is its privileging of in-depth investigations to produce detailed descriptions and analyses (Creswell, 2008). Such thick description is considered to be a feature of sound qualitative research practice (Cho & Trent, 2006; Creswell, 2008; Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Thirdly, compressed ethnographies allow for in-depth exploration of a specific aspect of culture during a shorter fieldwork episode than has been typical for more traditional ethnographies. In my case, I was in Senegal for a period of seven weeks in January and February 2013, with the intensive research period lasting four weeks. This timeframe aligned with the qualities of compressed ethnographies, which may be performed during short intensive periods of time (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010) as well

as during a series of short visits over an extended period of time (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004). While LeCompte and Schensul (2010) further note that traditional extensive ethnographic research requires significant allocations of time, money, and staff, compressed ethnographies provide greater flexibility. Compressed ethnography, then, provides a framework for ethnographic inquiry that takes into account what Jeffrey and Troman (2004) refer to as "different forms of ethnographic time" (p. XX). This approach allowed me to perform in-depth research internationally, within the constraints of my personal, familial, and financial obligations.

Moreover, my research fulfills the conditions of compressed ethnography as outlined by LeCompte and Schensul (2010). These conditions allow researchers to capitalize on limited time in the field while supporting the gathering of valid data (Knoblauch, 2005; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). As I identified earlier, the first condition is that the researcher should be familiar with the research site and topic, and if possible, understand the language prominent at that site (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). At the time of my fieldwork, I was already familiar with many Senegalese realities, including challenges facing the educational sector. (See the biographical statement section below for more information.) I also understood and spoke French, the official language and language of instruction (LOI), and Wolof, the predominant national language, specifically within the Dakar urban area (see McGlaughlin, 2009; Diallo, 2010). Secondly, compressed ethnographies focus on one particular cultural aspect (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). This study isolated one aspect of the culture in investigating how cultures and Indigenous knowledges are positioned within the context of one peri-urban school.

A third condition of compressed ethnography is to collaborate with "local experts or partners," particularly if the researcher is unfamiliar with the local setting (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). While I was familiar with the setting, I chose to work with a Senegalese research associate in order to enhance this study's validity and to capitalize on time constraints (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). I will elaborate further on the role and activities of the research associate below.

Timeline for Research

My research occurred during a seven-week period between December and February 2013. In general, the first three weeks in-country allowed for initial meetings and site visits that laid the foundation for the subsequent four weeks of compressed ethnography. (See the appendix for a detailed registry of daily activities.) Despite my planning, the initial week of the four coincided with a religious holiday, the *Gammu*, the celebration of the birthday of Prophet Mohammed and a pilgrimage to Tivaouane, the holy city of the Tijaaniya brotherhood. While the *Gammu* technically fell on Wednesday, a declared government holiday, the school was closed Tuesday thru Friday, reflecting a population highly adherent to the Tijaaniya. Obviously, this change in scheduling posed particular challenges given the limited time of compressed ethnographic research. Fortunately, I learned about the extended closure a week in advance and was able to observe two days of schooling the week before I was originally scheduled to begin. During the closure week, I also traveled back to the town where the research associate and two teachers (Monsieur Diouf and Monsieur Ndiaye) lived to conduct interviews with both teachers. Although I had hoped that I could use the time to also meet with teachers living in the research town, I was persuaded otherwise by the school Director

and the research associate. The school Director described the town during the *Gammu* as a ghost town, while the research associate felt it would not be appropriate so early on in my research to attempt to visit teachers' homes. While it was difficult to refrain from research activities during these few days of closure, I viewed this experience as a learning moment, particularly regarding the character of the town I was studying.

Collaboration with Research Associate

As I indicated above, one of the critical components of this study's design was partnering with a local educational expert as a research associate. This involvement supported the conditions of compressed ethnography (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010) and assured access, greater efficiency, and cultural and professional appropriateness throughout my research activities. This choice also represented an attempt to mediate my outsider perspective with that of an insider. It also allowed for critical dialogue and on-going reflection about emerging themes and interpretations as part of the research design (see Creswell, 2008; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Furthermore, working with a Senegalese expert reflects my own commitment to validate and provide space for local expertise. It represents a spirit of reciprocity to use this research opportunity to create possibilities for others on the ground. However, I also should note here my awareness that, even as a foreign researcher on a limited budget, I had the power to create this opportunity. While I was uncomfortable with this positioning, I felt ethically propelled to work with a research associate, particularly given his interest and past research. There was also obviously very much to gain from this design element as the research associate greatly contributed to the

success of this study. Next, I provide greater detail about the research associate, as well as the benefits and challenges of this design choice.

The research associate was a Senegalese man, who recently obtained a Masters degree in the United States writing on an issue related to Indigenous knowledges and education. For the purposes of this paper, I will refer to him by the pseudonym Alfa. In true accordance with the serendipitous nature of qualitative research (Rossman & Rallis, 2003), I came across Alfa's masters' thesis online as I was preparing a literature review, and we were able to meet on a previous visit I made to Senegal in January 2012. Coincidentally, Alfa grew up and lived in the same town as my husband's uncle and namesake, who we visited routinely. My husband's uncle held a prominent role in this town, as he had previously served as the head of the Parent Teacher Association and also as a *chef de quartier* (neighborhood leader). Alfa and I remained in contact after this initial meeting, and when the opportunity presented itself to bring on a research associate as part of the study's design, he was the obvious choice due to his own research interests as well as his familiarity with multiple research methods. While his English skills also aided in the facilitation of this study, they were a minor consideration compared to Alfa's overall qualifications. At the time of my research, Alfa was working as a high school English teacher in a town further away from Dakar. He had two days free during the weekdays, which he devoted to collaborating while I was on site. He also assisted in helping me to clarify my ideas and processes leading up to the research period. These discussions took place via Skype.

Working with Alfa had many benefits, as mentioned earlier. He played a key role in identifying the research site and negotiating access, as I discuss in the section on

access below. Alfa also provided invaluable insights as a linguistic and cultural translator. Most notably, working with a research associate who was Senegalese, allowed participants to speak in Wolof as they normally would, rather than altering their speech and perhaps their message for a foreign researcher. While my Wolof was advanced at the time of the research, Alfa offered the appropriate etiquette and turns of phrase that my Wolof did not yet allow. Furthermore, he assumed a more prominent role when interviews took place in Wolof. While I was able to participate in the conversation and redirect it when needed, in general, Alfa led these interviews. Lastly, because of Alfa's personal and professional experiences, he brought many skills to our project, including engaging students in conversation and demonstrating sensitivity to student realities. An example of the latter is how he recognized that students had not yet eaten when they came for a Saturday morning meeting. He insisted on providing participants with money so they could buy food as they returned home.

Collaborating with a local person as a research associate also presented some challenges, as could be expected. Alfa's identity as a high school teacher undoubtedly impacted our research, particularly our activities with children in the focus group and how primary school teachers reacted to us. Alfa's status as a high school teacher meant that focus group students would always be contextualizing their experiences within the teacher/student frame. At the same time, both because of Alfa's status as their elder and because he was a high school teacher, students treated him with great respect. In the same vein, I noticed differences in the way that Monsieur Diouf taught his class on days when the research associate was present. It seemed that Monsieur Diouf wanted to showcase his professional skills for Alfa. For example, during a lesson on Senegalese waterways,

Alfa commented that Monsieur Diouf should have a map depicting the waterways. When Monsieur Diouf replied that the map was lost, Alfa pointed to the hand-drawn map of Senegal on the back blackboard. Monsieur Diouf added in waterways to that map during his next geography lesson (fieldnotes). Monsieur Diouf also skipped over a period dedicated to independent student work on essays preferring to demonstrate his active teaching skills. In general, it seemed that Monsieur Diouf's teaching style may have been more relaxed on days when I was the only observer in the classroom. For this reason, our arrangement that Alfa would join me at the school two days a week due to his own teaching schedule was perhaps advantageous in obtaining a more balanced vision of Monsieur Diouf's work while benefitting from the research associate's expertise.

The last detail about Alfa and my relationship that is relevant to the study is our contractual agreement. We had long discussions via Skype prior to my arrival in Senegal about how we might work together. Once in Senegal, we met twice to further clarify our arrangement prior to my beginning at the research site. While Alfa insisted that the topic and opportunity to collaborate was enough compensation for him, I ethically felt that I had to provide him with monetary compensation. I determined a sum based on what I felt he might receive if he were to work with an international agency doing similar work. I also took into account my limited research budget. Alfa and I have remained in close contact, and he has continued to assist me as I needed translation assistance or had questions about the data collected. His contributions to this study have been invaluable.

Site Identification, Access, and Sampling

Issues of access and entry hold powerful implications for research. I address these issues within this present section. In choosing a classroom for analysis, I employed both purposeful and convenience sampling methods. Purposeful sampling methods inform a decision when it is based on which individual or place will "best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (Creswell, 2008, p. 185). As the majority of students in Senegal attend public schools (DPRE, 2008), I chose a public school for study. Similarly, I chose to work primarily with a sixth-grade (CM2) class, as they are the oldest group of children in elementary school and, assumedly, those who will be discussing the most complex issues, thus allowing for richer data. As my research developed, it became clear that I would need to visit and work with other teachers at the research site as well. I return to this issue below.

The exact host teacher and school of study, however, were chosen using convenience sampling methods. My access to the research site was greatly facilitated by the research associate (Alfa's) on-site knowledge and personal contacts. I communicated to Alfa that I was looking for a sixth grade (CM2) class in a public school close to Dakar, where I would be able to conduct a compressed ethnography. Based on this criterion, Alfa put me in touch with a childhood friend of his, Monsieur Diouf, who worked in a public school in Dakar's peri-urban expansion. Monsieur Diouf agreed to host us during the field research period and became the principle research participant in this study. In addition, Monsieur Diouf facilitated access with the school director and his fellow teachers.

While convenience sampling may sometimes limit a study's credibility (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Rossman & Rallis, 2012), choosing to follow Alfa's recommendations and work with Monsieur Diouf at his school facilitated access and ensured willing participants. Of course, I needed to account for these relationships during data analysis, which I will address in the relevant section below. Nonetheless, I determined that the benefits of working with Monsieur Diouf outweighed other considerations, particularly given the time constraints of my compressed ethnography, and, moreover, the importance of personal and professional connections within Senegalese society. In these ways, this manner of choosing the research site was culturally appropriate.

While the school had a total of 12 classrooms and 16 teachers, time constraints required that I focus on certain teachers for participant observation and interviewing activities. In general, I determined individuals to observe and interview based on both purposeful and convenience sampling techniques. Wherever possible, I attempted to interview teachers that I had observed. Moreover, my choice of participants was based largely on the recommendations of the school director as well as participants' availability. The classrooms were organized with two classes per grade, identified as "A" and "B." Since Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher) taught a "B" class, the director suggested I work with the other "B" teachers. He did not indicate any particular rationale for which teachers or students were assigned "A" or "B" classrooms. While I was able to follow this recommendation for almost all teachers, there were some exceptions. Below, I present a table of school personnel observed and interviewed.

Table 3.1: School Participants and Classroom Affiliations

Participant	Classroom	Observed	Interviewed
Director	Unassigned	n/a	□
Monsieur Ndiaye	1st grade (CIB)	□	□
Madame Diagne	2nd grade (CPA)	□	□
Madame Sarr	3rd grade (CE1A)	□	□
Madame Diallo	3rd grade (CE1B)	□	□
Madame Diouf	4th grade (CE2B)	□	□
Monsieur Ba	5th grade (CM1B)	□	□
Madame Ka	6th grade (CM2A)	□	□
Monsieur Diouf	6th grade (CM2B) (host teacher)	□	□
Madame Sy	Veteran floating teacher / Unassigned		□
Monsieur Sy	Veteran floating teacher / Unassigned		□
Madame Diagne	Arabic language and religion (A)		□
Madame Sall	Arabic language and religion (B)	□	

Exceptions occurred due to pragmatic reasons, but more so, out of mindfulness for personal connections and appropriateness. For example, in the case of Madame Ka (6th grade, A), Monsieur Diouf (6th grade B, host teacher) had made the suggestion to sit in on her class. In other cases, I was developing relationships with teachers and felt it a sign of respect to sit in on their classes. Also, while I observed Madame Sall's Arabic class (B), she was absent later in the research period, and I interviewed Madame Diagne (A) instead. I also conducted interviews with Madame Sy and Monsieur Sy, more experienced teachers who had been relieved of classroom assignments and who served as floating teachers. I chose these participants in deference to hierarchy but also hoping that their longevity at the school would provide rich data and a historical perspective.

In regards to community members, I spoke with the parents of the five focus group participants as well as two other individuals, presented in the table below (Table 2). These individuals were Monsieur Pouye, a man indicated as the village historian (purposeful sampling) and Monsieur Diouf's former landlord (snowball sampling). I arranged the latter interview partly as a favor to Monsieur Diouf. He seemed to view

interviewing his friend as a way of showing him respect and recognition of his efforts to host Monsieur Diouf when he first arrived in the town. In addition, I recorded one additional Skype interview upon my return to the United States. This interview was with a Senegalese educational consultant and former school inspector, whom I had met on a previous visit to Senegal. His expertise is especially in language issues, and information from our discussion served as background.

Table 3.2: Community Participants Interviewed

Name	Role
Pape Diop's mother	Parent of focus group participant
Abou Ba's grandfather	Parent of focus group participant
Yaay Adama's mother	Parent of focus group participant
Khady Diallo's mother	Parent of focus group participant
Ndeye Aicha's father	Parent of focus group participant
Yaay Adama's father	Parent of focus group participant/Treasurer of School Management Committee
Monsieur Diouf's former landlord	Community member/Parent
Monsieur Pouye	Village historian

The choice of focus group participants was purposeful and collaborative. Because Monsieur Diouf's sixth-grade class served as the home-base throughout my time at the school, it made sense that students from his class participate in the focus group. In addition, sixth graders would likely be more articulate and opinionated than younger students. They also would presumably have more advanced French communication skills. Given these considerations, we asked Monsieur Diouf to select five of his students for participation in the focus group on the basis of a variety of criteria: ethnic group, time in the town, school performance, language spoken at home, gender, and socioeconomic status. The result was a group of students: three girls and two boys, with varied ethnic backgrounds, histories at the research site, and school records. I described the focus

group participant characteristics in more depth in the Chapter 3 and throughout the data chapters. (For a descriptive table of focus group participant characteristics, see the appendix.) While Monsieur Diouf asked the identified students if they wished to participate in the focus group, a question we reiterated in the initial discussions with students, the context of Senegalese schooling leaves little room for student expression. (I return to this issue in the ethics section below.) Mindful of this ethical constraint, we made efforts so that students would find discussions beneficial. This included paying for student transportation and providing food when appropriate, as well as guiding students through the photo activity that I describe below in the section on secondary methods.

Entering the Research Site

Despite the time-restricted nature of compressed ethnography, my timeframe of arriving in Dakar three weeks prior to the intensive at-school research period allowed me to relatively easily move into my work. During this time, I held preliminary meetings with Alfa and two of the research participants and made an initial visit to the school. One of these meetings with Alfa was my introduction to Monsieur Diouf (6th grade teacher), who became my host at the school. I met with Monsieur Diouf and Monsieur Ndiaye at the research associate's home. All grew up in a small town approximately an hour and a half outside of the center of Dakar. Given my husband's connection to this town through his uncle and namesake, my husband accompanied me to this brief meeting. While one might view this as a patriarchal, my husband's presence allowed for research participants to verify my connection to Senegalese culture and to better understand my role beyond that of a foreign researcher.

During this meeting, we also confirmed that I would be working primarily with Monsieur Diouf, but that I would have the opportunity to visit other teachers' classrooms. Indeed, both teachers encouraged this approach. In addition, I used this time to briefly address my research methods. We also briefly discussed the terms of informed consent. While I was prepared to discuss this important issue at length, neither of the teachers seemed concerned at all. To the contrary, they continued to iterate that they looked forward to working with me and that the school and its personnel would be at my disposal. They also underlined that I had come to them through Alfa, the research associate. Given their relationship and esteem for Alfa, they were prepared to remove all obstacles to my research. This would be reiterated over and over again through the research period, and I return to this issue below in the final section on ethics. Lastly, during this meeting, we decided on a time that I would first visit the school.

My first visit to the school came two days later. In coordination with Monsieur Diouf, I arrived at the school just before break, accompanied by my husband. Monsieur Diouf came to meet us. He then introduced us to the Director, who expressed interest in my research and told me that as a guest of Monsieur Diouf, I was welcome at the school. As it was break, Monsieur Diouf then assembled all of the teaching staff for a brief introduction. He introduced my husband and me to the teaching staff and gave a description of what I would be doing at the school. The majority of all of these conversations occurred in Wolof. I also spoke about my gratitude for the staff's openness and emphasized that my role during the research period was to learn from them and their expertise. Some teachers asked for more clarity about the process, including whether or not I was going to visit other teachers and if I was writing my thesis (Fieldnotes). While

this was a short visit, Monsieur Diouf greatly facilitated my research by providing an opening for my activities at the school and establishing our connection. In Senegal, where human relationships are of particular significance, the importance of my connections to Senegal through marriage, to Alfa through shared research interests, and to Monsieur Diouf through association, cannot be underestimated. With these links in place, access to the research site was confirmed. Over the subsequent days, I would develop my own relationships with Monsieur Diouf, the school Director, and the other teachers.

Fieldwork Activities and Data Collection Techniques

In this next section, I describe the fieldwork activities and data collection techniques that I employed during the research period. As with all compressed ethnographies, I used multiple data collection techniques in order to optimize my time at site and to elicit cultural knowledge (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Reliance on multiple data sources, such as pairing participant observation with in-depth interviews and other techniques that favor cultural elicitation, allows the opportunity to develop a "comprehensive and consistent picture of a specific cultural domain" (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p. 123). Table 3.3 details the methods I used during this study. I present methods as "primary" and "secondary" based on their emphasis within data collection as well as the data analysis phase. (I describe the data analysis strategies, including triangulation, in more detail below.)

Table 3.3: Research Methods

Primary Methods	Secondary Methods
Participant Observation	Photo elicitation activity
Semi-structured interviews	Grand tours/Home visits
Focus groups	Video recording
	Audio recording
	Document review

For further illustration, I include Table 3.4, which provides more comprehensive information about research activities and the resulting data collected. (For a detailed day-by-day schedule of activities, see the Appendix.)

Table 3.4: Data collected

Data Collected	
Classroom Observation	• Grades 1-6 (18 days, nearly 100 hours direct observation) • Emphasis on one 6th grade classroom; at least one day in each grade
Interviews	School (12 people; 15 interviews): • Director (2 interviews) • 10 Classroom teachers (2 interviews with hosting 6th grade teacher) • 1 Arabic language teacher Community (8): • 3 Mothers • 2 Fathers • 1 Grandfather • Treasurer of School Management Committee (also a father) • Village historian • Community member (Hosting teacher's former landlord) Supplemental (1): • Skype interview with retired education inspector
Focus Groups	Student focus groups (3 meetings); Photo elicitation activity (2 meetings - boys and girls)
General fieldnotes	On-going reflections/fieldnotes (including those of Research Associate)
Audio/Visual Documentation	Audio recordings of all interviews Classroom video (12 days) Photographs (classroom activities, classroom walls, textbook pages used in observed lessons, classroom documents)
Background documentation	Documents: • Student notebooks (6th grade class only; *cahier de devoir, cahier de leçon, cahier de Français*) • *Guide pédagogique* (Teacher's guide) (5th & 6th grades) • Album de lecture (Reading textbook) (5th & 6th grades) • Director's Masters thesis • Educational policy documents (Including 1979 Decree: Primary education organization; Law 91-22)

As a final note, all activities were conducted in either Wolof or French, depending on participants. Conversations with school personnel were most often in French but included many Wolof exchanges. One interview presented an exception: the interview

with Madame Diagne, the Religious Instruction teacher. Her interview was entirely in Wolof, due in large part because her schooling was in Arabic, not in French. Similarly, interviews with parents, community members, and students were nearly entirely in Wolof. This was also true for participants who were not ethnically Wolof. Additionally, discussions with the research associate often occurred in English.

In the two sub-sections below, I provide a detailed description of the primary and secondary methods that served as the main engines of data collection. I also address access issues and describe sampling choices made throughout the research process.

Primary Methods

Participant observation, interviews, and focus group discussions served as the primary methods of data collection for this study. Within this section, I describe each of these methods as well as provide detailed descriptions of how I employed them at the research site. The level of detail attempts to provide readers with utmost transparency about the decisions that influenced the study.

Participant Observation

Participant observation served as the foundation for the study as it provided the context for the more deliberate elicitation methods. This technique entails immersion in the research site, acting as both a participant and observer to varying degrees (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Participant observation involves taking fieldnotes "on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site" (Creswell, 2008, p. 185). Like all techniques, participant observation has a number of strengths as well as weaknesses. Its strengths include its capacity to offer insight into firsthand experience of participants, record

information as events take place, and reveal various elements that individuals might not ordinarily discuss (Creswell, 2008). Weaknesses of participant observation include that the researcher may seem intrusive, it may be challenging to gain rapport with certain individuals, and ethnical dilemmas may arise if the researcher observes something that may require reporting, for example, issues of abuse (Creswell, 2008). In the subsequent paragraphs, I describe how I employed participant observation for this study, as well as address some of the challenges that I encountered.

In accordance with the above description, I made note of my days, beginning with the bus ride to school and ending with any evening activities, whether they included data organization, preparation for the next day, or more personal activities, such as playing with my daughter or visiting friends and relatives. When I attended classes, I took hand notes in notebooks, most often differentiating descriptive and reflective notes as recommended by Creswell (2008). Whenever possible, I used the time on the bus, evenings, and weekends to clarify and elaborate my notes, a step complicated by the intensive nature of compressed ethnography. This fleshing out was particularly important for observations I made when concerns of obtrusiveness prevented me from actively taking notes. Examples included conversations or events that occurred during breaks, or discussions I had with students walking into the school. I later would rewrite these comments within an observation tool that I developed as a table with separate columns for "Description" and "Interpretation/Comments/Follow up." I revisit this process in more detail in the section on Data Management and Analysis below.

Participant observation was indeed a very useful activity in allowing me to understand the school context and to see how teachers related to students' lived realities

and Indigenous knowledges. It also allowed me to gain access to a shared understanding of events occurring at the school. I called upon this understanding when conducting interviews with participants. As time went on, I also was able to focus more pointedly on various issues that arose, such as the use of the Wolof language within lessons. This strategy aligned with Rossman and Rallis' (2012) suggestion to initially employ a broad protocol focusing on "discover[ing] reoccurring patterns or events and relationships" (p. 195) prior to using more focused observation. Immersion at the school also allowed me to identify themes and patterns, essentially preliminary categories for analysis that later influenced the data analysis process (see below).

While participant observation proved to be a very generative activity, it was also challenging because of the spectrum that the role "participant observer" represents. Being a real "participant" would have required greater fluency in pedagogical techniques used within the classroom as well as being able to adopt verbal and non-verbal cues inherent within the school culture. It also would have required an established rapport with students, which my "compressed" time at site did not permit. To illustrate, I provide an example of the difficulties I faced in establishing a relationship with students. One morning, Monsieur Ndiaye was late to arrive, and I had arranged to observe his class. I sat waiting at the main office. The Director soon put me to work, instructing me to go to Monsieur Ndiaye's 1st grade class and make certain students were on task. He told me they had a text on the board that they should be reviewing. When I arrived in the classroom, students were more or less in their seats, but they were loud and they were certainly not reading the text. I attempted to quiet them down, but I could not get their attention. Eventually, a teacher came in and commanded students' attention immediately.

This included using the threat of corporal punishment for those who wished to continue to act up. As I explore in much detail in Chapter 5, which discusses corporal punishment, I had a great deal of discomfort with physical reprimands that I observed at school.

While I had hoped to be more participant than observer during the time at the school, as the above example illustrates, I soon realized that without the clout of a teacher, the students would never perceive me as an authority figure. I also was partly divided between students and teachers, wishing to understand both of their realities. I did my best to mediate this tension by appealing to both. During recess, I would often join teachers in their discussions. In the classrooms, I would try to introduce myself to students and have brief conversations. I also participated in Monsieur Diouf's (6th grade, host teacher) gym class with the students. Moreover, some of the teachers, Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher) in particular, presented me to the students by my first name, "Karla," rather than by "Madame Sarr." In some ways, this allowed me to have a more informal rapport with students but it also complicated any attempt to have authority over students like a teacher would. In the end, I was more comfortable allowing teachers to take the lead in their classes, as I sat in the back and observed. On occasion, teachers would refer to me during their lessons, or ask for my opinion. Sometimes, they would have students share their copybooks with me or turn their small blackboards my way so I could see their responses. I welcomed all of these opportunities and did my best to show my appreciation to those who were opening their worlds up to me.

As I have elaborated here, participant observation provided me with great insights into the cultures of the school I was studying, as well as teacher and student experiences. At the same time, the limitations of this technique to provide a more complete story were

very clear. I now turn my attention to how interviews complemented what I was learning through participant observation.

Interviews

In addition to participant observation, I relied upon both formal and informal interviews as a primary research method. Interviews provide a good match with participant observation, as they allow participants to provide history and to share information that cannot readily be observed (Creswell, 2008). Informal interviews are serendipitous and take place during other activities, while formal interviews are often planned in advance and recorded (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). In the case of this study, I consider conversations with Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher) as we walked to lunch or courtyard discussions with other teachers as informal interviews. I recorded details of these informal conversations in my fieldnotes (see Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Similarly, as I indicated in Table 2 above, I conducted 23 formal interviews during the research period. These interviews were with the School Director, teachers, as well as with community members.

In accordance with the characteristics of qualitative interviews, interviews for this study tended to be open-ended and unstructured with few questions that served to guide the interview. The open-ended nature of the interviews allowed for me to "elicit views and opinions from participants" (Creswell, 2008, p. 186) and for them to pursue trains of thought (Creswell, 2008; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). While I approached each interview with general themes that I hoped to discuss with participants, there was certainly room for more in-depth discussion of subjects that participants found to be particularly meaningful. I also tailored interview topics to the various categories of participants. For

example, the topics of discussion for the village historian focused on the site's history, Indigenous knowledges present within the community, as well as the school-community relationship. Interviews with parents generally provided information about childrearing practices, tensions that might exist between the school and community, as well as family histories. In the same vein, conversations with school personnel typically focused on classroom and school grounds activities, the implementation of the new *Curriculum,* and ways in which the community influenced the classroom.

Interviews took place in various locations. Discussions with parents and community members took place in their homes. This was most convenient for the participants while also allowing the research team to become more familiar with the town and student realities. In all instances, participants met with us in a separate room from their families to minimize interruption. On the other hand, all but two of the interviews with school personnel took place at school. These occurred either in classrooms, the school courtyard, or the Director's office. The two exceptions were interviews with Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher) and Monsieur Ndiaye (1st grade), which took place at their homes during an unexpected extended religious holiday break.

At the school, personnel determined when and where they to wished to meet. Initially, I had hoped to conduct interviews outside of teachers' instructional time, for instance, during breaks or open periods, after school, or on weekends. Yet, with few exceptions, these timeframes did not seem favorable to teachers. Instead, some preferred to conduct the interview during class time when students were doing busywork. Many of the interviews took place in the afternoon, and teachers commented that they tend to do

little in the afternoons anyhow. While I was uncomfortable with this strategy because of the harm it likely presented to student learning, I succumbed to participant preference.

In addition, the length of interviews varied, depending upon several factors including participants' interest in the questions, the amount of information they wished to share, as well as my own reading of cues such as when a participant's availability was about to end. In general, interviews with parents were shortest, while interviews with teachers tended to go longer, some exceeding an hour. I recorded all interviews using a digital MP3 recorder and took notes whenever appropriate.

An additional note on the process of conducting interviews at site illustrates a change made to the original research design due to on-site realities. The original research proposal included focus groups with teachers. This design decision was based on the efficiency of focus groups for collecting data from a larger sample size than individual interviews (Matthews & Tucker, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Moreover, my thinking was informed by my understanding of Senegalese culture tending towards collective social approaches and, therefore, it seemed reasonable that focus groups would be a good fit for the research population. However, it soon became apparent that individual interviews would be preferable for teachers. I discovered this information in conversations with the research associate, Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher), and Monsieur Ndiaye (1st grade teacher). This preference seemed to be due in part to complications of gathering teachers together after school, as well as a sense that teachers wanted their time alone to share their opinions. I understood that an individual interview with someone communicated their value as a resource and would likely provide teachers with a sense of pride.

In practice, I found that teachers were eager to meet with me, and they frequently interrupted their teaching day to do so. The interaction itself seemed to provide teachers with an opportunity they relished, thus seeming to make participation worthwhile for participants and offering an opportunity for reciprocity. To me, the preference for individual interviews also revealed a value for symbolism and formality within aspects of Senegalese culture. For instance, it seemed that many participants associated participating in an interview as recognition of their importance and stature at the school. The decision to do individual formal interviews with teachers represents a trade-off, however, as I was able to interview 11 of the 16 teachers, rather than hold focus groups with all of them. Setting aside time for individual interviews also translated into less time spent in other data collection activities. On the other hand, conducting individual interviews provided teachers not only with satisfaction but also resulted in perhaps more focused and prolonged conversations than would have been possible with teacher focus groups.

Like participant observation, however, interviews also have their weaknesses as a research method. For example, interviews rely on the interviewee's interpretations and may or may not be biased by the researcher's presence and the interviewee's desire to tell the researcher what he or she might want to hear (Creswell, 2008). This issue definitely surfaced during the research process, particularly with one teacher who asked repeatedly if she was telling me what I was looking for (Fieldnotes). Interviews also depend upon the communication and interpersonal skills of both the interviewee and researcher (Creswell, 2008; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Some participants, for example, seemed to be much more comfortable speaking with me than others. The pattern that I noticed was that many men were more comfortable than women. In the case of some female teachers, I

understood this in relation to women's divided role between professional and homemaker, sometimes leading to women having less training and confidence than their male counterparts. Because of these weaknesses, I chose interviews as one method among others for collecting data. I discuss my strategy for data triangulation in the section below on data analysis. In the very next section, I turn my attention to the last primary research method: focus groups with students.

Focus Groups

While teacher focus groups proved impossible once at the research site, a student focus group was highly successful. The design decision to implement the focus group was based on arguments in the methodological literature that focus groups are a good technique for working with children (Eder & Fingerson, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Bearing in mind that smaller groups are recommended for children (Eder & Fingerson, 2002), I designed the group for five participants. As I discuss below, on occasion, we broke this group down even further.

Besides being a good fit for inquiry with younger participants and for efficiency considerations with sample size, focus groups have a number of additional strengths, including that they benefit from positive group discussion and allow the facilitator to explore emerging topics (Matthews & Tucker, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Indeed, this seemed to be the case for this study. Often times, discussion was quite joyful and there was much laughter. Students regularly benefitted from each other's contributions, adding their own opinions. One of the students, in particular, was reticent to speak, often resorting to tongue clicks and head nods rather than articulating words. However, based on the responses of other students, we were able

to draw information from her through simple "yes"/"no" questions. Given this student's silence in class, as well as her shyness during the focus group, it is reasonable to believe that individual conversations may have been quite stressful for her. Moreover, of all the elicitation techniques that we used in this study, focus group conversations were the most open-ended and subject to participant sway.

In developing the research design, I was also mindful of special considerations needed when working with younger participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Certainly, the possibility of coercion that I mentioned above presented an ethical concern. In addition, Cappello (2005) notes that children are quickly bored by traditional interview techniques because their sociolinguistic repertories are still developing, limiting their abilities to express themselves (Epstein, Stevens, McKeever & Baruchel, 2006). Successful strategies for working with children often entail implementing a design that uses play or group activities. Moreover, it was important to establish an environment that is comfortable for children, being aware of dynamics, such as issues of age and power (Matthews & Tucker, 2000; Eder & Fingerson, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Another recommended approach is employing visual methods to allow the session to be fun and to differ structurally from a test or other evaluation (Epstein et al., 2006). With these recommendations in mind, I embedded a photo elicitation interview component within focus group activities. I describe the mechanics of this activity in the next section on secondary methods. We also held all discussions in classrooms, preferring to have the sessions in a comfortable space for students, even if the consequence might be that students would still see themselves in the teacher/student dynamic and not feel entirely free to express themselves.

One of the limitations that we encountered in working with students in the focus group was similar to the limitations of working with teachers: time. Not only was our time at the research site limited, but students felt daily time constraints. That students leave school on time after recess so that they may each lunch was a major concern of students and teachers. According to interviews with teachers, many children did not seem to have enough to eat, and many of them had to walk great distances to reach their homes. Sixth-graders were also specifically susceptible as they returned to the school for afternoon classes Monday through Thursday. While all classes had afternoon sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the sixth-grade class is an exam class and held additional class hours. Trying to accommodate families' schedules, Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher) would begin his classes around 3:30 pm, rather than the prescribed 3 o'clock. He hoped the extra half-hour would allow parents the margin they needed to gather the resources to feed their families that day (Fieldnotes).

We met with the focus group students multiple times during the research period. With the exception of the very first meeting, focus group discussions involved both myself and the research associate. Focus group conversations most often lasted around 20 minutes. The subjects of conversation were as follows:

- Introductory conversation and a discussion of Focus Group objectives;
- Group conversation about students' background, interests and activities (Focus Group #1);
- Two separate meetings to review photos (Focus Group #2 part 1 and 2); and
- A final wrap-up discussion with all students about schooling experiences (Focus Group #3).

As indicated in the third bullet, we met separately with female and male participants to review the photographs they produced. This was due to time constraints and the coordination of home visits. Because the two boys lived closer to the school, I was able to perform their home visits earlier in the research period than I was able to meet with the girls' parents. In order to visit the girls, the research associate and I came to school one Saturday. On that day, the girls came to the school first to discuss their pictures and then to take us to their homes to meet their parents. We held discussions about the boys' pictures after the final wrap-up discussion with the entire group about schooling experiences. This occurred on an afternoon in which classes were cancelled due to a professional development activity. In addition to these more formal sessions, I held brief meetings with students to initiate and check in on the photo elicitation project and their progress.

The data produced from focus group discussions proved to be very rich, providing insights into the context of the lives and experiences of young people in the community of the research site. Focus group data also illuminated aspects of students' schooling experiences that we did not learn through participant observation or from teacher perspectives. Comments about cultural ties and activities were particularly relevant to this study. As I have begun to describe here, many of the primary methods that I relied upon during this study were intimately connected to secondary methods, such is the case of focus group techniques and the photo elicitation activity. I turn my attention to these secondary methods next.

Secondary Methods

As I have described above, many of the primary methods used in this study were informed or enhanced by utilizing secondary research methods. I have identified these methods as "secondary," because they play a supporting role to the methods I identify as "primary." In many cases, there was less emphasis on these methods during data collection, and they do not feature as prominently in the data analysis. Reliance on multiple elicitation methods is a characteristic of compressed ethnographies as it allows for greater depth in the documentation of activities observed in order to compensate for time constraints (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004; Knoblauch, 2005; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). The methods that I refer to as secondary methods are: 1) grand tours/home visits, 2) photography and photo elicitation activities, 3) video and audio recording, and 4) document review. I describe them each in turn below.

Grand Tours & Home Visits

A grand tour of a research setting is a technique that a researcher uses to gain greater familiarity with the physical layout of a research site. In addition, walks through the site may also allow a researcher to gain insights into the beliefs and philosophies of research participants (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). In my case, in which logistical considerations prevented my living at the actual site, walks through the town provided a lot of information about the community surrounding the school and its activities. My first tour of the community took place on the third day into the research at the school and was led by Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher). I would also regularly walk through town to eat lunch at one of the teacher's houses. As indicated above, this time walking allowed me not only to become increasingly familiar with the town, but also to have

informal discussions with teachers. The final grand tour of the town took place during my last week at site. On this occasion, the school security guard, Cheikh Thiam[8], took Alfa (research associate) and myself for a tour of the more traditional part of the town, where he had grown up himself. During that visit, we were able to observe a number of local activities, including children collecting shells at the beach and fishermen laying out their nets. Cheikh Thiam also showed us how many of the original habitations of the town had been engulfed by the sea. Clearly, these visits provided invaluable information for contextualizing school activities and the data that we collected during the research period.

In addition to these grand tours, visits to participants' homes allowed for even more intimate contact with research participants. All of the community interviews occurred in participants' homes. In addition to allowing us insights into children's lives outside of the school, visits to students' homes provided another unexpected benefit, as parents repeatedly thanked us for coming to speak with them. It seemed that this gesture of going to peoples' home represented a sign of respect for parents. They seemed to interpret our attention as tribute for their support of their children's studies. In this manner, home visits represented a symbolic reciprocal gesture.

Photography & Photo Elicitation

The use of image capturing technology (still photographs and video) also served a supporting role in the data collection efforts. Photographs and video are powerful, revealing unconscious thoughts, and efficient in capturing a lot of data in a short period

[8] I have chosen a pseudonym that includes both a first and last name, rather than simply referring to him as Monsieur Thiam. I do this in accordance with the formula used at the school. While teachers and the Director are almost always routinely referred to by their titles, others at the school, like the security guard and the cleaning woman, are referred to by their first and last name.

of time (Knoblauch, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In this section, I describe how I used photography to enhance the other data gathered. This included two approaches: 1) using a still camera to capture images of objects, people, and activities and, 2) the photo elicitation activity that referred to above. (I discuss video in more detail in a separate section below).

While I had trepidation about the obtrusive and distracting nature of cameras (Xavier de Brito & Vasquez, 1999; Knoblauch, 2005), given time constraints as well as the support and interest of Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher), I began using the still camera on the very first day at the research site. Indeed, Monsieur Diouf brought his own digital camera in from time to time, often taking pictures with staff during breaks. The photos that I took focused on the following:

- school grounds,
- community,
- classrooms (materials and activities),
- classroom decorations,
- blackboards during lessons, and
- classroom activities (both student and teacher).

I also used the camera as a makeshift photocopier to record images of textbooks, other didactical materials, and relevant documents, such as classroom rosters or exam statistics. I also used the camera this way to record lessons written on the board. Both these techniques enhanced the efficiency of my work.

In addition to these general purposes for photographs, this study included a photo elicitation component (often called photovoice), which placed 35 mm disposable cameras

into the hands of the five focus group participants. Cameras were distributed during the second week of fieldwork. According to the methodological literature, allowing participants – particularly children – to capture images puts children in control, encourages involvement and interest, and triggers thought and reflection (Matthews & Tucker, 2000; Cappello, 2005; Epstein et al., 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Specifically, placing cameras in students' hands opened up avenues for discussions about what they found to be important and relevant to their lives.

In initiating the photo elicitation activity, I gave students a brief overview of camera usage and provided them with instructions to take pictures of people and things that were important to them. While none of the students were seasoned photographers, some of them had taken pictures before. I also gave students two additional instructions: 1) they should not take photographs at school, and 2) they should not take photographs of themselves. I collected the cameras at the end of the week for processing in Dakar.

As I mentioned above, we discussed students' pictures during two separate focus group meetings, one with girl participants and one with boy participants. During these conversations, we asked students to identify five photos as the ones most important to them. We then asked them to go through these photographs one by one, sharing with us a description of the photo's subject. These conversations provided information about students' families and social networks, activities outside of school, chores, work, and living environments. In some cases, students were quite creative, taking pictures of images on TV or photographs of pictures within their homes. Resulting conversations were quite generative and insightful, allowing the research team to follow up with questions and pursue avenues for discussion that likely would not have arisen in a more

traditional focus group setting. Moreover, being able to speak about the pictures seemed to take the attention off of the students and open the air for more in-depth discussion. Given the time constraints we faced at site, this feature – essentially 'compressing' time - was invaluable.

Like all research techniques, photo elicitation has its limitations. For example, some of the students had difficulties taking photographs, either due to lighting, positioning, or simply the case of one student who was so concerned about choosing the perfect subject that she became overwhelmed. However, even when a student had few photographs, he/she was nonetheless able to describe missing photographs, thus still providing insights into what the student perceived as important. Students with significant difficulties were given a second camera that they could use without restriction. While time did not allow for further discussion of these photographs, this gesture provided a form of reciprocation for students' efforts in focus group activities.

Initially, I had great concerns about this activity, not only because of the additional layer of complication added to the research, but also because I was able to provide cameras to only five of the school's over 700 students. I was concerned that this activity would unfairly favor these students above others. Nonetheless, Monsieur Diouf (6th grade teacher, host) was supportive of the activity and felt that students would be eager to participate (Fieldnotes). Another concern was the ethics of having students take pictures outside of the school. I decided that I would provide students with the original photographs once we had debriefed the pictures, but that I would keep the negatives. Had there been pushback about this from students or their parents, I was prepared to make note of the photographs but to leave the negatives in Senegal. To the contrary, parents

also seemed intrigued by the activity and, similar to their reactions to home visits, many seemed to view this attention to their child as positive. This trust made me even more self-scrutinizing about the way in which I would store and later use the photographs.

Video & Audio Recordings

During my time at the research site, I used video on 12 days and audio recordings on many occasions. In this section, I describe how I used both technologies to assist in data collection. Unlike the still camera, I was less comfortable using a video camera at the research site. In general, I was concerned about the obtrusive nature of video (Xavier de Brito and Vasquez, 1999; Knoblauch, 2005). Nonetheless, I began using video during the second week at the school.

I took video with both an HD digital camera and, when appropriate, my still camera. I mounted the video camera on a tripod in the corner of the classroom that I was observing. While the camera often attracted students' attention, they also seemed to quickly forget its presence. Due to the limited space available on memory cards as well as battery life (even with multiples of each), I discerningly chose which class excerpts to record. For example, I would often stop the recording when students were copying from the board or doing silent work. In instances when the camera was off, but a sequence in the classroom caught my attention, I was often able to capture the sequence using the video function of my still camera. Most often, I was attracted to sequences that seemed to be culturally relevant or involve cultural commentary.

In addition, I used a digital MP3 player to record audio sequences either in tandem with the video camera (providing a backup or alternative audio track) or if I was unable to record the sequence with video. Even more prominently, I used the MP3

recorder to document formal interviews. All of these recordings were organized, uploaded, and later analyzed. I address these procedures in the section below on data organization and analysis.

Document Review/Materials Culture

The final data collection technique that I elaborate upon here was the identification of material culture related to my research topic. As I indicated in Table 2, the articles that I collected during the research period included the following:

- Student notebooks (6th grade class only; *cahier de devoir, cahier de leçon, cahier de Français*)
- *Guide pédagogique* (Teacher's guide) (5th & 6th grades)
- *Album de lecture* (Reading textbook) (5th & 6th grades)
- Director's Masters thesis
- Educational policy documents (Including the 1979 Decree: Primary education organization; Law 91-22)

These materials complement many of the photographs that I took of classroom decorations, class rosters, school statistics, and other documents. According to Creswell (2008), using materials that already exist saves time and identifies items that are considered to be important. However, such items may also be difficult to find, incomplete, inauthentic or inaccurate (Creswell, 2008), as was the case with these materials. I was able to find a *Guide pédaogogique* at an outdoor market in the center of Dakar, but only on the day before my departure. Student notebooks and the *Album de lecture* were easier to obtain, as they are shorter documents, and I was able to send them

for reproduction with the local photocopier who regularly came to the school. The 1979 Decree was available from the education ministry's website.

The Director's Masters thesis is an intriguing document that merits further mention as it also provides evidence of the depth of relationship that I was able to develop during my limited time at the research site. Once morning, the Director called me into his office and started to read to me from his Masters thesis that he had written decades before. He explained that much of what we had been discussing in our interviews resonated with the topic of his Masters thesis, that is, challenges to education in rural zones. In passing, he expressed his sorrow that he did not have an electronic copy of his thesis. I offered to type it up for him and return it to him on a thumb drive. He appreciated this gesture, and I was able to provide him with an electronic version a couple of days later. He also granted me permission to keep an electronic copy for myself.

Like all data collection methods, their ultimate utility lies in how the resulting data are incorporated into the final product. I next discuss the data organization and analysis strategies that I employed.

Data Management and Analysis

Data analysis is an ongoing process that requires continual reflection (Creswell, 2008). In this section, I provide an overview of the process for organizing the data collected as well as the subsequent analyses leading to the production of this dissertation. I include details of my thinking in determining how I would handle these steps, as well as particular considerations required by the research setting.

Organization, Transcription, and Translation

Meticulous on-site organization and on-going reflection are important components of sound inquiry practice. Because of the nature of compressed ethnography, data collection is particularly intensive and requires close attention and recording of many details (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004). While data management was ongoing throughout the research period, those weeks were extremely intense, allowing for minimal management at that time. Such messiness and intensity are characteristics of qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), and I knew it was important to remain flexible. To the extent possible, I uploaded and backed up data daily, catalogued metadata, and clarified and elaborated upon my fieldnotes. In order to protect the confidentiality of participants as well as the integrity of the data, all data were stored on my computer under password and on an external drive, both locked within the confines of my residence in Dakar. Upon my return to the United States, I typed up all of my notes. I then was able to develop an Excel spreadsheet that served as a fieldwork registry, in which I catalogued daily activities, organized information, and elaborated metadata (descriptors for the data that included date, time, setting, etc.).

Once the data were organized, I began to transcribe and translate, first focusing on observation notes. In the interest of transparency, here I provide close detail of both processes as they entail judgment and interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). My observation notes were a mixture of French, Wolof, and English, depending on a number of factors, including the language participants were speaking, and often times, given the quick pace of interactions, my preference for taking notes directly in English. As I

understand and can write all three languages, when typing up notes, I left my observation notes in the language in which they were originally recorded.

Once I had finished writing up and elaborating my observation notes, I began to transcribe participant interviews. While there are many ways to approach transcription, I felt that I needed to capture the majority of what was said in transcript form, both because I was concerned I would miss something and because this seemed a more cautious approach given the use of multiple languages within the recordings. In addition, the cleaning up, transcription, and translation of data proved to be invaluable in immersing me once more within my dataset. In order to facilitate transcription, I used ELAN, an open-source linguistics software, that allows for transcription and annotation of complex audio and video recordings. To the extent possible, I transcribed speakers' words directly in the language of their utterances. I took the liberty to create sentence structures and demarcate punctuation, realizing that this is an interpretation (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Once a transcript had been completed, I converted ELAN files into Word files. In the case of focus group transcripts, these tended to be quite long as the number of exchanges between interviewers and interviewees were numerous. Many of the student answers were often quite short, at the extreme, sometimes limited to non-verbal nods or clicks of the tongue, indicating "yes." In order to compress and synthesize the data from these meetings, I created an Excel spreadsheet that included summaries of student responses to different questions/themes. I further edited the resulting Word and Excel files for consistency and to lightly clean up the data.

Special Considerations

Due to the research setting, as well as my use of various research methods in accordance with a compressed ethnographic design, special considerations arose as I organized, transcribed, and translated the data. I detail these processes here.

To begin with, transcription of observations and interviews in Wolof was particularly challenging. While Wolof is a written language and has an official orthography, knowledge of this system is often limited to linguists and language teachers. Despite the official orthography, variations remain, making transcription of Wolof particularly challenging. In most cases, while I maintained the original Wolof, I also developed English translations of most Wolof utterances in order to avoid any distraction that this might trigger during data analysis. I did this by creating additional lines in interview transcripts for the English translation. When I was unclear about the meaning of participants' words, I contacted native Wolof speakers for their assistance; first my husband and secondly, Alfa, the research associate. On occasion, my questions led to discussions that helped to further contextualize and understand participants' perspectives. I made note of these contributions within the transcripts.

Although I left French and English utterances in the language recorded, I did translate the excerpts brought into the final report in English as direct quotes. Even at the time of my proposal, I decided it would be important for readers to see the actual words of participants, even if this takes up space in the report or is in a more obscure language, like Wolof. Marshall and Rossman (2011) support the inclusion of words in the original language as cues and reminders to the readers of the final report that the research was conducted in a language other than English. This decision also represents a stance against

hegemonic oppression of the English-speaking world (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) and aligns very nicely with the ethos of claiming African knowledges as Indigenous knowledges and positioning my work within the theoretical framework of anticolonial and decolonizing methodologies, as discussed in Chapter 2.

I also made the decision to cleanup some of the utterances, so as to protect the personal and professional dignity of participants. For example, one teacher used a lot of crutch words such as "um," and "so," that did not contribute to the meaning of his words. Without the full context of this teacher as highly skilled, including these crutch words may not only distract the reader but also imply false messages about his intelligence. In accordance with Marshall and Rossman (2011), who note that transcription will likely entail decisions as to how to present and cleanup the data for presentation in the final report, I took the liberty to alter original phrasing when such considerations arose.

Besides language considerations, in managing the data, I also needed to make decisions about how to use the secondary sources of audio and video. My fieldwork period produced a wealth of data in the form of video and picture images, including students' pictures from the photo elicitation activity. In using these data, I was mindful that their seemingly objective nature often masks the reality that such images continue to reflect the perspective of the person who took them (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). As I took pictures and video, I was making decisions about which images and sequences to capture and which ones to ignore. In most cases, I only returned to video or audio recordings of classroom sessions when observation notes were vague or when a sequence seemed particularly culturally relevant. For example, I returned to the recorded video to

transcribe a lesson from Madame Diallo's class that was entirely in Wolof. I also returned to Monsieur Ba's audio recording of an *enquête* (investigation) activity.

Similarly, while I did not return to every single photo that I took to elaborate its content, I did return to photos when they could offer supplemental information, particularly for lessons observed. For example, I would take a photograph of the teacher's lesson on the board while students were copying the lesson. This allowed me to continue to observe rather than taking down lessons into my observation notes. Once back in the United States, as I typed up my observation notes, I simultaneously reviewed photographs taken during that lesson. When relevant, I would write out the contents of the photograph into my observation notes. For example, I would write out the texts on the board into my notes. This allowed me to return to the verbatim texts during subsequent analysis. For the photo elicitation activity, I recorded the content and comments for each of the pictures that students described as important during the focus groups. I entered these comments within the Excel spreadsheet that I developed for these conversations.

Data analysis

Once I had organized and prepared the data, the dataset was ready for analysis. I began by generating a preliminary list of themes that I would use to code the data. Coding is the "process of sorting, categorizing, grouping, and regrouping data into piles or chunks that are meaningful" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 271). Themes arose at various points throughout the research process. Some of these themes were related to the literature, such as Indigenous knowledges and hybridity, and had been included in my original research proposal. Other themes became evident during the fieldwork and were

apparent in my personal reflections and emails back to my committee. Examples included the presence of family values and corporal punishment at the school.

I chose to use NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software program, to aid in the coding process. Due to the size of video, audio, and images, I did not import these data. Rather, I had already created references and elaborations from these data within either my observation notes or transcripts. In this way, while the original files were not included in NVivo, their messages were present in the data. As I moved through the coding, I recorded my thoughts as well as my process using memos. I subsequently coded this information so that I could include it in the themes that I was developing. Once I felt that I had coded substantially enough for this dissertation, I utilized NVivo's functionality to isolate excerpts according to code. I read through these excerpts, getting a sense of their meaning and looking for patterns and trends. I collapsed some of the themes into categories, such as "implicit culture" and "culture within lessons," which later became the larger "finding" chapters of the dissertation (see Creswell, 2008). I also identified direct quotes that would support and elaborate emerging findings. While NVivo helped in many ways, I was not able to fully take advantage of its query capacity because the data were in multiple languages. It was impossible to do word frequency counts, for example, as NVivo does not recognize word relationships beyond English. This demonstrated one of the complications of working with a multilingual dataset.

Triangulation

During the data analysis phase, triangulation occurred in a number of ways. Triangulation entails using various forms of data collection techniques and sources (Cho & Trent, 2006; Creswell, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

This technique enhances a study's generalizability, its trustworthiness, and helps to see multiple truths of the social world (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). As I mentioned above, I relied upon participant observation, interviews, and focus groups as primary data sources. Secondary data sources, such as audio and video recordings, and images, further complemented and elaborated the data collected through the primary techniques. In combining the information gathered through all of these methods, I arrived at a more nuanced understanding of the research topic. For example, observations confirmed the Director's statement during an interview that, despite its prohibition, corporal punishment is still widely used at the school. Interviews also allowed for me to share with participants my initial interpretations that arose during participant observation. In many cases, teachers responded with their own opinions, sometimes countering my views. Sharing data and interpretations with participants also bolstered the believability and trustworthiness of this study (Cho & Trent, 2006; Creswell, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Moreover, interviews allowed me to gain a glimpse into school activities and teaching practices that extend before and beyond the timeframe of the fieldwork period. Through discussions with school personnel, for instance, I was able to explore how the new *Curriculum* has altered instruction. I also gained understanding of lessons that time did not permit me to observe, for example, *les arts scéniques* (performing arts) in Madame Ndoye's second grade class.

Lastly, collecting information about students and families' lives outside of the school grounds provided invaluable context to what I was seeing within classrooms. Conversations with students through focus group discussions, accompanied by photos they took for the photo elicitation activity, allowed a window into their non-school

related activities. It also allowed me to better understand what they had come to appreciate about school and how they understood the relationship between their home and school learnings. Similarly, meetings with parents and other community members allowed for even greater contextualization. In some instances, these discussions provided key information about the community and its history. I achieved a more comprehensive picture of the delicate and dynamic dance between what parents see as more traditional expressions of culture and what they hope to obtain for their children through formal schooling. Furthermore, these discussions provided insight into childrearing practices and how these may translate into the classroom as well.

Biographical Statement

In qualitative research, the researcher's identity is deeply imbedded in the research project, as his/her personal lens provides the initial filtering of data (Creswell, 2008). Transparency of a researcher's identity, voice, perspectives, assumptions, and sensitivities enhances a project's "intellectual integrity" and "places boundaries, describes assumptions, and details the process" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 54). Furthermore, such exposure also provides the reader with a better sense of the researcher's past experiences and, in this way, allows the reader a more nuanced understanding of the research project (Creswell, 2008). In this section, I provide a biographical statement that 1) discloses my motivations for conducting this study, 2) addresses the experiences and research background that I bring to this study, and 3) addresses the unique role of outsider/insider that I assumed during the research period.

Firstly, my motivations for conducting this research project were both professional and deeply personal. On a professional level, this project is my dissertation

research and represents the most crucial experience of my academic career. In this sense, I see the success of this project closely connected with my future professional success and, by extension, the well-being of my family. My interests in this topic are also very personal. Since I was young, issues of culture and heritage have intrigued me and, after my study abroad year in Dakar in 2000, I held a burning appreciation for Senegalese cultures. In some ways, I have found that developing an intimate understanding of Senegalese cultures fills the vacuum of growing up in an American family that only nominally enacts cultural practices from our Polish and Italian heritage. However, my enthusiasm was often – not always! – met with Senegalese individuals' disregard for Senegalese culture and history. Furthermore, as I indicated in Chapter 2, the literature on Indigenous knowledges and education identifies that many Africans have felt a disconnect and alienation from their culture, largely due to schooling. Now, being married to a Senegalese and the mother of a bi-cultural child, my appreciation for many of the elements of Senegalese cultures is heightened and, on a personal level, I was intrigued to study how a present-day Senegalese school might address these issues.

Secondly, I approached this research project with experiences and skills that bolstered the goodness and soundness of this study. At the time of my field research, I had over 12 years of experience in connecting with Senegalese cultures in various capacities including as a study abroad student, the coordinator of cultural exchange programming at an American NGO based in Dakar, and as a member of a Senegalese family. These experiences allowed me to develop language skills as well as cultural understandings that contribute to strong interpersonal skills, an element essential to sound qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Additionally, experiences in African

classrooms provided me with background experiences that helped me to navigate my time at the school that served as the research site. These experiences included two years as a teacher in a Gabonese school as a Peace Corps Volunteer and a more recent school-based research project in rural Senegal in collaboration with the Grandmother Project, a small international NGO. Moreover, I brought research skills to this project that I developed through coursework at the University of Massachusetts' Center for International Education as well as through consultancies and workshops. Moreover, these experiences help to fulfill the conditions for compressed ethnography outlined above.

Lastly, part of my identity as a researcher in Senegal is that of an outsider/insider often resulting in a position of privilege and power. I also recognize that these abilities, and, moreover, my marriage to a Senegalese man, may have provided opportunities for access which may not have been available to someone who was seen as a total outsider. Moreover, being an adult – in all settings – placed me in a position of power over children. Awareness of these aspects of my identity, as well as my motivations for conducting this research, helped me to be vigilant in protecting participants' rights and welfare throughout the research process. I elaborate further on how I did so in the next section on ethics.

Negotiating an Ethical Approach

Recognizing that all research is an intervention and impacts participants, I maintained an approach throughout the research period that centered ethics in the forefront of my mind and my activities. Moreover, in addition to following criteria for acceptable and competent practice, a study is deemed trustworthy if it is ethical (Rallis & Rossman, 2012). Ethical concerns occur at two main levels, articulated as procedural

ethics and "ethics in practice" (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004) as well as "big E and little E issues" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 47). The first of these levels refers to the informed consent process, which is highly debated within the literature (see Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Cho & Trent, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2010; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Holliday, 2013; Moosa, 2013; Tikkly & Bond, 2013), while the second level of ethics, "ethics in practice" or "little E issues," addresses everyday ethical issues that arise in the field during interactions with participants. In this section, I address both these levels of ethics. I begin first with the more institutionalized informed consent process, its accompanying demand for anonymity, and close with an exploration of how I negotiated issues of reciprocity within the setting unique to this study.

Institutional Approval and Informed Consent

Prior to the research period, and in accordance with research processes required at the University of Massachusetts, I submitted paperwork to the College of Education's Institutional Review Board (IRB). I received approval for my preliminary research design as a result of the review. In addition to having this institutional approval for my research, I was already well-trained in issues of conducting research with human subjects due both to academic coursework as well as through professional consultancies. To further strengthen the ethical rigor of this study, I also maintained close contact with my academic advisor, a well-respected methodologist with a special interest in ethics, as well as other committee members, throughout the research period.

One of the cornerstones of IRB approval and ethics in research ("big 'E'") is informed consent. However, the informed consent process is just the beginning of more

in-depth and nuanced ethnical concerns (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Holliday, 2013). Holliday (2013) considers ethical issues to be as emergent as cultural details and research findings. These are negotiated through a flexible and on-going research process. Moosa (2013) further argues that ethics need to be situated "within our own cultural systems" (p. 483). Three core principles underscore the nature of informed consent: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Below, I address how I approached informed consent during the research period as well as many challenges that I encountered.

Balancing the perceived rigors of institutional research with the on-the-ground realities was one of the challenges I encountered throughout the research period. Anticipating some of these challenges, I initially built into my research proposal that I did not expect to obtain written documentation of informed consent, but that I would have documentation with me if participants requested it. As I went about collecting data, I was certain to orally review the purpose of my research and what I would be doing with the information gathered each time that I met with participants. Working with Alfa, my research associate, was particularly beneficial in this regard. He had a way of explaining consent procedures and couching them within the requirements of American universities that could only be conveyed by an insider with experience at American institutions.

As for my work with children, with the exception of a Saturday morning discussion that involved three students and visits to student homes, all of the activities took place during the school day and were part of the regular school routine. As such, it was not necessary to seek students' formal informed consent as they were under the cover of the teacher, who had already provided consent for my participant observation. This approach was approved within my IRB proposal. Instead, as focus group activities were

an addition to the school day, I relied on Monsieur Diouf (host teacher) and Alfa, my research associate to be certain that my requests of students' time were appropriate. As I mentioned above in the section on focus groups, I did not seek out formal parental permission but in visiting children's homes, parents' support of the project was clear. Accompanied by anonymity (see below), as well as my vigilance that students not be unduly harmed or that my questions trespass cultural norms, I felt that my research process provided adequate protection to the students involved.

Moreover, it occurred to me that the process of asking for people's consent was somehow irrelevant or conflicting with people's expectations for normative interactions. While I did continue to discuss the process, participants almost always seemed disinterested in what would happen to the information they provided. Indeed, people seemed to brush aside my words and my pressing the discussion seemed to invite suspicion. Instead, there appeared to be other alternative assurances that provided cover for our interactions. For example, parents trusted that the school and the teachers would not put their children in harm's way. Similarly, there seems to be trust or deference to foreigners, like myself. I found this alternative explanation perhaps the most bothersome. Yet, most importantly, having a connection to a trusted individual seems to have been the most significant assurance, and it went well beyond what a formal informed consent discussion could provide. To further illustrate, I include here an excerpt from my fieldnotes after a conversation with Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher). I had attempted to readdress the purposes of my research and what my intentions were for the information produced. In response,

> Monsieur Diouf told me that I can do whatever I want and need to do. He said the reason he is doing this [participating] is because of Alfa and that Alfa wouldn't do

> anything if he thought it would be harmful. This made me realize that in many ways, Alfa is putting himself out there in a vulnerable position in helping me and I need to be respectful of that. This makes me feel ever more so the need to be ethical, thoughtful, and reciprocal in my approach. (Fieldnotes)

Despite my efforts to obtain consent from participants, I was also well aware that teachers, students, and even parents may have felt pressured to work with me. While the relationship that develops between researcher and participants is of utmost importance and it is imperative that it be non-manipulative (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), several factors may have contributed to this unintended coercion: 1) Senegalese hospitality, 2) deference to a White outsider, 3) power dynamics inherent within school identities, and 4) friendship network connections that initially led to access. I elaborate on these factors in the next paragraph.

Firstly, Senegalese culture is known for its *teranga* or hospitality. People often say that the guest is "king." Secondly, being a White outsider placed me in an additionally privileged position that dates far back to colonial times. In many ways, being an outside researcher may have influenced participants' collaboration in a way that would not have been true for a local researcher. Working with Alfa, my research associate, was one attempt I made to mediate this dilemma. Thirdly, due to the esteemed position of teachers within Senegalese society, it is doubtful that students, and even parents, would have been able to resist Monsieur Diouf's (6th grade, host teacher) suggestion that they participate in this study's student focus group. Additionally, Monsieur Diouf may have seen little need to ask for parents' permission as responsibility for young people is much more fluid in Senegalese society than it is in more individualistic cultures, like in the U.S.

With these factors in mind, I attempted to be hyper-vigilant to respect the welfare and confidentiality of participants. Much in line with suggestions from Moosa (2013) and

Holliday (2013), I relied upon my own knowledge of cultural values and appropriateness to determine how I would proceed. In many ways, I found cultural appropriateness to be just as important as research ethics. I supplemented, balanced, and revised my own cultural knowledge with solicited advice from Alfa, my research associate, as well as research participants, especially Monsieur Diouf (6th grade teacher), who acted as my host at the school during the research period. Moreover, I also took cues from the environment and was willing to alter my research design if it seemed that my processes were creating concerns. I next turn to a specific aspect of informed consent, anonymity, and discuss how I addressed protecting participants' identities within my research.

Anonymity

As part of informed consent and in alignment with ethical research procedures, efforts have been made to ensure confidentiality and protect the identity of participants. This includes the assignment of pseudonyms to all research participants as well as my research associate. To the best of my ability, I have also omitted identifying details of individuals and masked the identity of this one particular Lebou town. In some cases, this required the absence of facts and information that would have created an even more tangible context for this study. In the case of my research associate as well as one participant, in particular, this decision to honor anonymity was especially complex. I explore this in greater detail in the next paragraphs.

Like other aspects of informed consent, granting anonymity is not necessarily straightforward. Indeed, I found that anonymity also resulted in placing constraints on research participants and their ownership of knowledge. This is particularly problematic given that one of the underlying assumptions of this research is the value of Indigenous

knowledges and the need for parallel recognition with other more "conventional" forms of knowledge. Similarly, Tikkly and Bond (2013) identify that research settings and parameters of sound practice may differ in post-colonial environments. These issues became particularly clear to me when I was interviewing Monsieur Pouye, the village historian. During our conversation, he repeated several times how he felt that his oral retention of the village history was less acknowledged than if it were in written form. While I wish that this present narrative could serve as a forum to recognize his skills and to showcase his knowledge, in the interest of protecting all participants to the extent possible, I decided to also assign a pseudonym to the village historian.

Similarly, the decision to maintain the anonymity of Alfa, my research associate, was also fraught. Moosa (2013), in her article on anonymity and representation in small research communities, highlights the complications of anonymity specifically when access is negotiated through friendship networks. In cases like Moosa's context as well as my own, revealing details of any of the people involved in providing access might well indicate the identity of the research participants as well as the research site. For this reason, I decided to maintain the anonymity of my research associate. As I mentioned above, this decision was particularly complex, as I recognize his numerous contributions and find it also ethically imperative to provide him with recognition for his work. Similar to the situation with the village historian, protecting the identity of the research site and all research participants unfortunately outweighs concerns for acknowledgement.

While the informed consent process and restraints of anonymity were particularly challenging, embedded in my thought processes is a sincere concern for people's well-

being and that their participation be meaningful and, at the very least, not burdensome. With this in mind, I turn my attention to the issue of reciprocity in the next section.

Reciprocity

As I have indicated above, I consider reciprocity to be an ethical issue, and I determined that, to the extent possible, reciprocity would be one of the pillars of my research process. As Marshall and Rossman (2011) contend, qualitative studies are intrusions into people's daily lives and it is useful to identify an approach for providing compensation that "fit[s] within the constraints of research and personal ethics and of maintaining one's role as researcher" (p. 121). To this list, I would add that methods of compensation also fall within cultural appropriateness and expectations. It was imperative for me that this study be beneficial not only to me as a researcher, but also to my research associate and research participants. Being realistic, it is unlikely that the findings from this study will result in major changes that benefit research participants. However, I identified several ways during and subsequent to the research period that I could provide materials or services that had the potential to immediately positively affect participants. I outline these gestures below.

The first and most obvious gesture was to participate as much as possible and as appropriate within school activities. I address how I negotiated my role as participant observer in the section above on primary research methods. Another way of showing respect for the school, the teachers, and the students, was to dress appropriately. Dress is extremely important to many people in Senegalese society, and when possible, I wore Senegalese outfits, taking my cues from my Senegalese in-laws as well as female teachers at the school. Teachers verbally appreciated these efforts, and my attire also

provided subjects for conversation, particularly among female teachers. In addition to these efforts, I also was able to contribute to a very unique tradition of the school of hosting Friday prayers among teachers and sharing a drink together (see Chapter 5). Accordingly, I offered to coordinate and provide refreshments on the last Friday that I was at site. This was well-received by the school staff and incidentally coincided with a going-away ceremony that teachers had organized for me (see pictures below).

Figure 3.1: Pictures from last day at research site
Picture (at left): Receiving a table cloth presented by the Director (center) and school personnel; Picture (at right): Researcher giving a short speech of appreciation

A second way of reciprocating to research participants was through providing symbolic gifts. Prior to leaving the U.S., I had discussed the question of gifts with Alfa, my research associate. Due to my restricted research budget as well as concerns for not being perceived as a gift-doling foreigner, I felt limited in the amount of gifts I could purchase. Yet, recognizing their symbolic importance, I brought six University of Massachusetts tee-shirts with me to site as well as packages of pens for students. However, after spending weeks with the school staff and having benefitted upon a number of occasions from their own generosity (e.g., paying for my taxi fare, buying me

small gifts such as incense and other things), I strongly felt the need to provide some gift to all personnel at the school. However, at that point in my research timeline, I did not have the time to go to a market to buy gifts. After soliciting much advice (albeit conflicting) from Alfa, Madame Diallo (3rd grade teacher), and my in-laws, I decided that I would provide male personnel with the t-shirts while providing female personnel with a small monetary gesture. While I was not entirely comfortable with money as a gift, this is routine for many Senegalese ceremonies and interactions. For Monsieur Diouf (6th grade), my host teacher, who was unparalleled in his patience and generosity, I provided a particularly unique gift of a dress for his daughter, a year younger than my own child. The dress I gave him was one of my daughter's favorites. While it felt appropriate to provide these gifts, nonetheless, the process of determining gifts and how to distribute them was onerous and exacting, largely because of conflicting advice and my concern of offending.

In addition to these symbolic gifts, and acknowledging Xavier de Brito and Vasquez's (1999) argument that making a film for teachers represents an important gift, I also provided participating teachers with DVDs of footage taken within their classrooms as well as pictures relevant to them and their students. I was able to create the DVDs prior to my departure, and I distributed them through the assistance of Alfa and Monsieur Diouf. As for photographs, there were too many photographs and not enough time to reproduce them while in Dakar. Not to mention the cost of photo printing in Dakar well exceeded my already exhausted research budget. Instead, I printed them upon my return and sent them via international mail to Monsieur Diouf. While I had few concerns about the content of photographs, I was more concerned about two of the DVDs in particular.

This concern arose because some of the footage captured teachers hitting students. While teachers were well aware that they were being filmed, it is still unlikely that they would have behaved in this same manner with an educational inspector in their classrooms. For this reason, while I produced the DVDs, I made certain there was only one copy and that it was given only to the concerned teacher. While I realize that digital data can spread outside of my control as a researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), I determined that the reciprocal gesture was worth the risk, particularly since the incidents in question were brief and few in number and were embedded in hours of recording.

Similarly, I also reciprocated by honoring Madame Diallo's (3rd grade teacher) request to accompany her to an incense store one afternoon, holding two short impromptu English lessons with Monsieur Diouf's class, and typing up the school director's handwritten Masters thesis. Another way that I also could have reciprocated directly to students would have been to accept their invitations to eat lunch at their homes. While I had accepted such invitations countless times when living in Senegal, invitations from students made me particularly uncomfortable. Throughout interviews with school personnel, they often spoke of students' meager means and how many of them did not eat enough meals a day. Similarly, in this situation, I held a teacher-like status vis-a-vis students and felt that I might impose more upon these invitations than other invitations I accepted in the past. I also took my cue from Alfa and teachers at the school, who made their own lunch arrangements. This was confirmed when Alfa declined similar offers that arose during visits to the families of focus group participants.

Lastly, perhaps the most significant way of showing gratitude for the efforts of research participants and offering some sort of return compensation is by staying in touch

with them beyond the research period. To this end, I have made phone calls to Monsieur Diouf (6th grade), my host teacher, sometimes during the school recess, at which point it is possible to speak with the other teachers as well. Above all, my collaboration with Alfa has led to both a professional and personal friendship that extends to the present. His continued connection to Monsieur Diouf and Monsieur Ndiaye (1st grade teacher) also assures that I remain linked to research participants, hearing of their developments and sending greetings, even if we do not speak directly as frequently as we had just after the end of the research period. Given that my husband's extended family continues to live in Monsieur Diouf's hometown, I imagine that it will be easy and matter of course to pay visits to Monsieur Diouf and Monsieur Ndiaye on subsequent trips to Senegal, as it would be similarly feasible to visit the school as well.

All of these challenges surrounding informed consent, anonymity, reciprocity, and research ethics, in general, represent the difficulties of implementing a seemingly rigid system and procedures in a particular environment with its own realities (see Holliday, 2013; and Moosa, 2013). While I have indicated several factors above that underline points of irrelevance, Tikkly and Bond (2013) write more broadly about research ethics under post-colonial conditions. They cite that frequently referred to codes of ethics are actually Western and assumedly universal (i.e., Western) in nature. They go on to problematize the implementation of Western ethics in environments that may value other and multiple ways of interacting. Somewhat to the contrary, Holliday (2013) identifies the current approach in ethics as positivist and debated even within Western contexts. He counters that despite perceived rigidity, the field of ethics is a culture in itself, and like all cultures, is fluid and responsive. Moreover, Holliday (2013) argues that ethics has the

postmodern capacity to adapt to more creative research approaches and accept revisions by non-Western researchers. In the case of my present study, and as described above, I relied upon my own cultural knowledge and that of participants to help me to be appropriate while still respecting the ethical requirements for respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. While this debate is obviously beyond the scope of this paper, it is intriguing and relevant to my present study. Further exploration and elaboration of ethical issues in post-colonial contexts may certainly be warranted.

Summary

In this chapter, I have provided a detailed account of the methods and techniques that I employed in conducting my compressed ethnographic research. This includes how I processed the data collected, as well as the ethical considerations that framed this study. While the nature of validity is highly debated within methodological literature (see Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Cho & Trent, 2006), a study is deemed trustworthy if it follows criteria for acceptable and competent practice and if it is ethical (Rallis & Rossman, 2012). The painstaking detail that I present in this chapter represents well thought-out data collection and analysis techniques and supports trustworthiness. My approach also emphasized relationships, which also enhances credibility (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Within the chapters that follow, I present my findings that arose from the methods outlined here.

CHAPTER 4

OVERVIEW: ACTIVITIES, INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES & CHILDREARING PRACTICES

In order to contextualize the data and analysis that make up Chapters 5 through 8, I devote this current chapter to a brief presentation of prominent activities within this town as well as some of the more significant cultural manifestations. Such information helps to create a more complete and complex picture of students' lives and realities. Specifically, I seek to provide information about how both adults and children may spend their time. I also identify areas that may be conceptualized as Indigenous knowledge, many of which align with the literature indicated in Chapter 2. Moreover, insights into childrearing strategies offer a baseline for comparison between home and school practices. I begin first with an exploration of daily activities.

Parents' Income Generating Activities

In order to provide context for later analysis, this study provides a glimpse into the activities that parents in this town undertake in order to support their families. While this is not an exhaustive list, data collected found that professions include:

- gathering shells for sale (women mainly)
- fishermen (men)
- resale of fish (women)
- vendors
- administrative work
- tailors/seamstress
- marabouts/Muslim holy men (men)
- housewives (women)
- mason
- drivers (taxi or clandos) (men)

- mechanics (men)
- politicians

The school director provided further clarification to this list when he added that some of his students' parents work as "*fonctionnaires*." While the term literally refers to civil servants, in use, it extends to people who have more office-based work assignments. He further indicated that it is typically parents living in the town's extension, rather than the *village traditionnel,* who hold these positions. For further illustration, the students in the focus group identified their parents do the following:

Table: 4.1: Focus group parents' activities

Name	Father's activities	Mother's activities
Yaay Adama	Entrepreneur	Not indicated
Khady Diallo	Mayor	Seamstress
Ndeye Aicha	Cashier at bus company	Not indicated
Abou Ba*	Retired - previously domestic, driver	Vendor in market
Pape Diop	Mason	Gathering shells

*Note that Abou Ba lives with his grandparents. These activities reflect his grandfather and grandmother's activities respectively.

Children's Activities

Similarly, this study illuminates the various activities children engage in within this town. The activities included those related to school, such as homework, after school tutoring, and private summer classes. Children also indicated that they assist their parents with various sorts of work. Work ranges from household chores to informal employment. In general, I learned that girls take part in many of the household chores including washing dishes, sweeping and mopping the floor, laundry, and cooking, while boys do other tasks such as washing sheep and cleaning out the chicken coop. One focus group participant, Abou Ba, mentioned that he often cleans his grandfather's car. Interestingly, all of the girls say they help their mothers in the kitchen but they all laughed when we

asked if they could cook. Some said they could make plain rice or considerably simple Senegalese dishes. One student's mother indicated that her daughter, Yaay Adama, does everything she can to avoid cooking. She fears that if her older sister learns she can cook that Yaay Adama will be forced into cooking on a regular basis. Incidentally, her older sister left school and is now married with a baby. All children help parents and relatives run errands, either to the corner store or elsewhere.

In addition, children often engage in economically lucrative activities. For example, it is common to see children (girls in particular) who have left or never attended school selling bags of water or mint along the main highway leading up to this town. Within the town, harvesting shells is a common activity and we saw a group of children doing so when we toured the beach one day during school hours. Pape Diop's sister, who has left school, regularly helps her mother collect shells from the beach. Pape Diop helps when he is not in school (Pape Diop's mother, Interview). Male children may also fish with their relatives. Similarly, girls may resell fish.

Figure 4.1: Pictures: Sea-related activities
Pictures (left-to-right): Collecting shells; Hoisting shells into car for transport; Shell-sorting machine; Traditional fishing boat

One of the students, Pape Diop, had a particularly interesting story and provides an example of a child in a very economically precarious situation. Pape Diop's mother collects shells as her main activity while his father is a mason. The difficult economic situation of the family was evident from our visit to the home, upon which, Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher) who accompanied me on this visit said that it was a very poor family. One of the other teachers at school, Madame Sy (Veteran floating teacher), had found Pape Diop seven years prior to my research working alongside his father as a mason and with time, she convinced Pape Diop and his parents for him to begin school. Pape Diop is now around 12 years-old and he continues to work as a mason during weekends and summers alongside his father. On weekend mornings, he helps make butane gas bottle deliveries. As part of the latter, he takes care of the horses used to pull the gas cart. One of the photos that he took for the photovoice project that he was most proud of was a picture of the horse as he was washing it at the beach. We had the following dialogue when we asked what Pape Diop does with the money he earns from his work:

> Pape Diop: *Donner ça à ma maman*. / Give it to my mother.
>
> Research associate: *Donner ça à ta maman. Et à part à donner ça à ta maman, le reste, tu en fais quoi?* / Give it to your mother. And besides giving it to your mother, the remainder, what do you do with it?
>
> Pape Diop: *Le reste...je le met...dans un petit...[difficult to hear - noise in class, speaking softly]...* / The remainder....I put it....in a little [difficult to hear - noise in classroom, speaking softly]...
>
> Research associate: *Tu gardes ça quelquepart...* / You keep it someplace...
>
> Pape Diop: *Quelque part.* / Some place.

Research associate: *Et quand ça devient un grand somme, tu en fais quoi?* / And when it becomes a large amount, you do what with it?

Pape Diop: *Pour aller acheter des habilles...des chaussures.* / To go buy clothes...shoes. (Focus Group #1)

This exchange underscores Pape Diop's perceived responsibility to provide money to support his mother and, by extension, his family. He puts the money that he keeps towards very prudent purchases, such as buying clothes and shoes. Unlike some of the other children in the focus group, this family does not have additional money for experiences like private tutoring, summer travel to visit relatives, or home luxuries like computers or more spacious living accommodations.

While children spend a lot of time in school, doing homework, helping their parents with housework and their income generating activities, this study also identified several activities that one might qualify as pastimes. These include:

- watching TV - soap operas (girls)
- listening to music - Senegalese mbalax (girls)
- playing and watching soccer (boys)
- Senegalese wrestling (*burri/la lutte*) and watching it on TV (boys)
- raising animals: pigeons, goats, and horses
- marshal arts (karate and tai kwan do) (girl)
- playing video games (PlayStation) (girl)
- studying the Quoran with a private tutor (girl)

I have noted whether a male or female student cited the activity to illustrate the fluidity of participation in activities and to complicate the notion that boys' and girls' activities may be entirely separate. All of these illustrations of how children spend their time attest to a

diversity of experiences that span the spectrum of traditional to more Western/modern activities. In the next section, I specifically explore cultural practices and Indigenous knowledges, which may also occupy the time of this town's population.

Cultural Practices and Indigenous Knowledges

In order to study how cultural activities and Indigenous knowledges might be incorporated within schooling, it was necessary understand their presence within the community. While there is certainly a melding between cultural practices and Indigenous knowledges, some activities stand out as the latter. Recall from Chapter 2 that I perceive Indigenous knowledge as sub-sets within cultures, referring specifically to information that reveals an understanding of the environment and a related set of processes allowing possessors of that knowledge to act and manipulate that environment. In this light, research indicated at least four areas that might be considered to be Indigenous knowledges: 1) fishing, agriculture, and livestock activities, 2) oral traditions, 3) spiritual practices, and 4) healing techniques. I provide a brief overview of each below.

Fishing, Agriculture, and Livestock Activities

As identified above, the traditional activities of the town and its Lebou population revolve around the fishing industry and include the catch and sale of fish as well as the harvesting of shells from the ocean. Certainly, fishing and agriculture (largely, market gardening) are practices that may be conceived to be cultural practices. Other associated practices include swimming and creating, repairing, and maneuvering fishing nets (*balli).*

The historian I met with explained the creation story of the town, which describes how the Lebou came to be fishermen. He then noted,

> *Après ak tool yi lanu doon exploiter. Parce que temps yi sunuy magg u njekké yi, ay cultivateurs lañu won. Affaires u baay rekk lañu xamon ak gej. Lébou moom, bé, gej. Ñaari yo yu dañu doon bolé quoi. Ci lañu judo, moom lañu fekk. Parce que bii école bi, amugul, eh. Ecole baalé am.* / And then, with the fields that we were used to cultivating. Because during our grandparent's time they were farmers. That's all they knew about - cultivating and the sea. Lebous - agriculture and the sea. Those two things they'd do together. That's what they were born into. That's what they found. Because the school wasn't there yet. That was their school. (Monsieur Pouye, Interview)

One last activity that bears mention here is also cattle raising. The historian quoted above also shared how cattle raising played a significant role in his own family's history and heritage. He explained that while cattle raising was not as prolific an activity among the Lebou as fishing related pursuits, it was present. As this is an activity that is seldom associated with Lebous, such commentary contributes to a more nuanced picture of this group. It is also an activity that is synonymous with Pulaar traditions, and thus, indicates a commonality between two of the main groups within this town's population. It further provides evidence of overlap of Indigenous knowledges among various ethnic groups.

Oral Traditions: Tales (*Leb*)

The literature on Indigenous knowledges indicates oral traditions as a typical example. This study found one particular type of oral tradition that is familiar to students: tales (*leb).* In Wolof, the word *leb* refers to tales that are passed down orally from one generation to the other. In the most typical relationship, grandparents transmit this information to their grandchildren. While one of the parents, Yaay Adama's mother, expressed frustration in not having the time to always respond to her children's requests

for stories, in general, my research revealed that the transmission of *lebs* remains a prominent cultural practice. Every one of the students in the focus group is familiar with the concept of *leb*, and they all identified people in their lives who share this knowledge with them. One student in particular, Abou Ba, proudly stated that he will be able to pass *lebs* on to his own children. As is evident from the chart below, this practice is also shared among ethnic groups.

Table 4.2: Focus group participants' sources for *leb*

Child's name	Transmitter(s) of *leb*	Language of *leb*
Yaay Adama	Older sister; mother	Wolof
Khady Diallo	Paternal grandparents	Pulaar
Ndeye Aicha	Paternal grandmother	Wolof
Abou Ba	Maternal grandmother	Pulaar
Pape Diop	Uncles	Wolof

During an interview with the Ndeye Aicha's father, he provided greater detail of the characteristics of *lebs*, including that they are an integral part of initiation proceedings. He also explained how his mother frequently shares tales with her grandchildren:

> *Suma yaay, bon, xam nga, ñoom ñoom, dañu am lu xamaanté ni, xalé yi, le soir, il leur arrive où, seen mame, des fois le soir, ñungi ñow ci mame pour mu lebbal leen. Bon, lool lanu xamoon ci Saloum. Xalé yi, ba leggi, dañu fa def...Xale yi, dañu dem ci mame yeen sais, "Mame, lebbal nu." Ñu togg. Mu leb. Leb, en quelque sort, éducation la. Boo ko xamaanté ni, dangay ko def ci forme de récite. Waax. Créer benn gènre de scenario, comme roman. Bon, netali ko xalé bi, ci lu ko genn jegge ci ñoom pour que moom, men na ko xam. Ñoon lanu leen di def. /*
> My mom, well, you know, we, we have what the kids - in the evening, sometimes in the evening, their grandmother, they go to their grandmother so that she tells them tales. Well, that's what we know in Saloum. The kids still do that there, even now... The kids, they go to her sometimes, "Grandma, tell us stories." They sit. She tells them stories. The tales, in a way, it's educational. If you know it, you do it in the form of a recitation. Oral. Create a scenario, like a novel. She tells it to the kids, in a way that is close to them, so they can understand it. That's how it's done for them. (Ndeye Aicha's father, Interview)

This passage is particularly rich, for it shows the intergenerational nature of families even in urban areas, as well as how children are interested in the stories and request them of their grandmother. She, in turn, continues to see this as an important role and, clearly, her son values how she is able to share her knowledge with his children. In the last few sentences, he also hints at how his mother is able to manipulate the stories so that children are able to understand them. This approach parallels that of making information culturally relevant and accessible to children in any education setting.

Furthermore, in exploring the issue of oral transmissions with students, we asked them if they could share any examples of *leb* with us. Two of the students, Khady Diallo and Pape Diop, were brave enough to tell a tale to the rest of the group. Both students used Wolof, even though Khady Diallo's L1 is Pulaar. Khady Diallo's *leb* is best described as a joke about terrorists raiding a mosque and a clever imam who saves himself first. Pape Diop's *leb* was similarly a joke about public transportation, a dead body, and a neighborhood. Both *lebs* demonstrated the shifting nature of oral tales and how they expand not only to encapsulate morals and lessons that grandparents want to share with younger generations, but also simple jokes that children may tell amongst themselves[9]. While it is reasonable to assume that *leb* are likely not transmitted to the same extent in urban environments as in more rural situations where families still gather around fires in the evening, these findings support the complex nature of cultural transformation and continued adherence to evolving oral traditions.

[9] In the same way, my husband shared with me how well into his 20s, he and friends used to drink tea late into the night telling each other *lebs* in a Dakar neighborhood. The group of friends represents a variety of ethnic groups and their *lebs* were often stories and jokes. They prided themselves on their oratory skills.

Spiritual Practices

The town in which the school is located and the Lebou ethnic group, which founded the town, are well-known for practicing spirit beliefs. These practices represent African religious practices[10] and, in most cases, are practiced in addition to Islam. These practices include regular offerings to spirits at identified locations called *xamb*. There are two types of *xamb,* those that venerate spirits related to a particular family or individual, and *xamb thiossane*, dedicated to communal ancestors or protective spirits. In some Lebou areas, the *xamb thiossane* may commemorate a protective spirit who assisted in the founding of the village/town.

Perhaps the most well-known of Lebou practices is the *ndeup* ceremony, an exorcism ceremony that involves music, dancing, and animal sacrifice. Those who organize and lead the ceremony are designated as *ndeupkats*. People come from all over the world to be healed through *ndeup* and *ndeupkats* have also traveled to heal people internationally, including communities in the United States (see Morehouse School of Medicine & Cosaan Foundation, 1996; Prometra, 2014). The issue of *ndeup* came up repeatedly in interviews with participants when discussing local culture and its relationship to schooling. To further illustrate, I include here a passage from an interview with Monsieur Diouf's former landlord. As we discussed, I asked Monsieur Diouf's former landlord if the people in this Lebou community also had *xambs*. He answered:

> *Am na fii suma ker. Suma doom dafa febar. Wa [nearby Lebou town] ñow ndeupal ko. Wa [nearby Lebou town] ñu ñow fii. Def nanu fii une semaine. Dow*

[10] The term "African religion" remains an imperfect designation. Arguably, Islam as practiced in Senegal can also now be considered to be an African religion, especially with the presence of the two Senegalese originating brotherhoods: the Mourides and Layennes. Here, in referring to the Lebou practices as examples of African religions, I note the African origin and character of these sustained practices.

> *yegg rekk. Xamb yange nele nu tabaax. C'est Lébou, quoi...Du ker yipp mo ko am [sucking teeth sound - indicates negation]. Am na ay xamb thiossane - comme falle [name of place] quoi. Sunu ker bu mak bi./* There's one [*xamb*] in my house. My daughter is sick. People from [a nearby Lebou town] came to do an *ndeup* for her. People from [a nearby Lebou town] came here. They spent a week here. Up and down. The *xamb* is over there where's there's construction. It's [*xamb* and *ndeup*] Lébou...No. Not every house has one [sucking teeth sound - indicates negation]. There are *xamb thiossane*, like over there [name of place], you know. We say [name of place]. Our big house.

His response clarifies that people in this community both practice *xamb* and *ndeup* as well, as the fact that he has chosen to use it to treat his young daughter. This shows that this knowledge and practice is being passed on to younger generations. This knowledge and practice is not without its controversy and critics, however. I shall return to this point when discussing teachers' attitudes towards cultural integration in Chapter 8.

Healing

Another significant example of Indigenous knowledges that arose during research activities, is that of healing through practices rooted in African methods. For example, one of the boys in the focus group, Pape Diop, shared that his mother's father heals people. Pape Diop told us about his grandfather when we asked the students to tell us who they look up to. When we asked if his grandfather heals people frequently, he said, "*chaque jour suba gi ak ngoon gi* /every day, morning and afternoon" (Focus group #1). Pape Diop also indicated that his grandfather is Sossé, an important piece of information, as this expands the ability to heal within this study beyond the Lebou group, and again exemplifies shared categories of Indigenous knowledges. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, healing and Indigenous medical practices are frequently cited in the literature as examples of Indigenous knowledges.

In addition, the historian that we spoke with provided multiple examples of healing talents within his own family. For instance, he explained how his mother had been able to heal the sick using herbs and other concoctions. He also explained that his mother passed this knowledge on to him and his sister, as well as to his daughter. He explains his own healing abilities in the following passage:

> *Men naa ko def...Am na ci buri - ay sécret rekk la. Naka la ti - febar ni? Hémorroids, damay ko faj. Damay faj hémorroïdes. Bu mu commencer attaquer rekk, nga ñow ma defaral rekk. Bu ma la jooxe, boo naane rekk, après jel saay ki rekk. Disparu. Yoo yu yipp, ci sunuy makk yi la woon. Te yoyu yipp, lipp yu jengi yi, am na lu fii des. Boobu, pour nga am ko, il faut nga dem ci dekk ba. Parce que ngis gis [healing plant] ak yo yu...il n'y a rien a Dakar.* / I can do it...There's a lot - it's just secrets. What's it called again that illness? Hemorrhoids, I can heal them. I can heal hemorrhoids. When it starts attacking you, just come and I'll work on it for you. When I give it to you, if you drink it - after just take as needed. It goes away. All of that, we got if from our elders. And all that, all that we learned, some of it remains. (Monsieur Pouye, Interview)

This excerpt recognizes healing as a skill passed down intergenerationally that may also complement other existing forms of health care. Monsieur Pouye elaborated later that his daughter, who also can heal, has a full-time job at a nearby clinic. On the other hand, he does indicate that with the boom of the town, it is more difficult to find the plants needed for healing. While the knowledge remains and continues to be passed down from generation to generation, the materials needed require more efforts to locate.

Contesting Voices

While all participants recognized these cultural elements and forms of Indigenous knowledges presented above, not all were enthusiastic about their existence. Before continuing on to the next section, I wish to provide a counter-example from one of the focus group participant's families. Yaay Adama's family serves as a dissenting voice to

more typical Lebou culture because they express a desire to distance themselves from their cultural heritage. To illustrate, I present a passage from our interview with Yaay Adama's mother. When I asked her to provide examples of Lebou culture, she articulated an insurmountable conflict between Lebou culture and Islam:

> *Thiossane bi daal... Xam naa, ñoom dinanu def ay turru, comme boo febaré ni, ñu yobb la ci rabb ñu turu la. Mais, ñoom nak, dunu ko def. Comme ñu jimm dundu sunu diné, duñu def lolu.* / Culture, now... I know, they do offerings, like if you're sick, they'll bring you to a spirit and do an offering for you. But, we don't do that. As we're trying to follow our religion, we don't do that. (Yaay Adama's mother, Interview)

For this mother, Lebou practices are incompatible with adherence to Islam. While this is certainly not the case for all participants in this study, some of whom live comfortably within religious syncretism, Yaay Adam's family is particularly conservative in its approach to religion. However, other participants will also echo skepticism and mistrust of these practices. I return to this topic again in Chapter 8. Moreover, such examples of cultural criticism and refusal to participate reinforce the plurality of cultural beliefs that exist at this school and among participants. I next turn my attention to a brief overview of childraising techniques, another area where research produced multiple viewpoints.

Childrearing Strategies

Understanding how children's education takes place in the home was a significant focus of this study. This was partly in an effort to corroborate African methods of education presented within the literature (see Chapter 2) as well as to form a baseline for comparison with schooling practices. The information here largely reflects interviews with focus group participants' parents, but teachers also provided additional perspectives. This topic presented a particular challenge to the research team, as we often seemed to

encounter misinterpretations of our questions. This may have been due largely to linguistic limitations. Questions about how people educate (*éduquer*) their children when they are small often resulted with respondents speaking about the importance of enrolling children in pre-school *(jardin d'enfants)*. In several cases, it was only when we utilized the Wolof phrasing, *yaar*, that we were able to move forward in a conversation about home childraising approaches and techniques. It also proved beneficial to ask questions of a more personal nature, such as "how would you advise me in raising my own child who is a toddler?"

Still, parents often insisted that formal schooling is one of the most important strategies in bringing up children. In regards to African forms of education, particularly those present within the literature (see Chapter 2), participants were more omissive. It seems that they may not consider what takes place at home as important or as integral to a child's education or upbringing. On the other hand, it may simply be avoiding stating the obvious. With the exception of Ndeye Aicha's father who spoke at great length and with much veneration for the way that children are raised at home, other participants seem to believe that there is little to learn at home. Khady Diallo's mother stressed this point when she said, *"dunu nango ñu nekk ci ker gi di trainer ni /* we don't just let our kids stay at home sitting around" (Interview).

In cases where we were able to obtain information about home childrearing practices, the most common response was "how I was raised." Through further conversation with research participants, we learned that education at home takes a number of forms, many of which align with the literature on African education (see Chapter 2). These forms include active exercises, such as speaking with children, telling

them informative tales (*leb)* (see above), and physical discipline. More passively, children also engage in various activities, which participants also understand to be instructive. These include chores (see section above on children's activities) as well as shadowing parents in their work, for instance, fishing, collecting shells, or gardening. In general, and commensurate with the literature, parents confirmed that many of these activities are gender-specific. In addition, formal initiation is another method of inculcating children in the ways of society. Although two participants spoke specifically about initiation (*lil/jongu)*, Ndeye Aicha's father and Madame Diouf (4th grade teacher), their comments referred to how such rites occur in their home villages. While ethnographies (XXXX, 1952)[11] address male circumcision rites in Lebou society, there was no indication from this study that initiation rites are still being practiced.

Two childrearing strategies, in particular, merit more extensive treatment. First, in the next section, I elaborate upon parents' commentaries about schooling, especially as they spoke not only of formal public schooling, but also of Quoranic instruction. Second, I provide more information about participants' perspectives on physical punishment as a childrearing technique. Both topics - religious instruction and physical discipline - will feature prominently in later chapters (see Chapter 5 for physical discipline, Chapter 7 for religious instruction).

Importance of Schooling

As mentioned earlier, in regards to more institutionalized schooling, participants repeatedly mentioned the importance of sending children to school - both "French" and

[11] As a reminder, some references have been masked to protect identities.

Quoranic schools. Of course, it bears mention that all of the participants in this study have a stake in French schooling, either as former students, parents, or as members of school personnel. A more nuanced understanding of how people within this town view more traditional forms of education would require conversations with individuals who are not connected, or who have not benefitted, from formal schooling. In responding to our questions, some parents immediately conveyed the importance of sending their young children to pre-school *(jardin d'enfants)*. Several comments intimated that this is when a child's education really begins. For example, Khady Diallo's mother explains how her husband enrolls his children in pre-school as soon as possible. She reiterated, "*dugguloo ko ci jardin, du xam lan la begg suba. /* You don't put them into preschool, they won't know what they want tomorrow" *(Interview).*

At the same time, many parents send their young children to Quoranic school *(daara)*. Typically, attending a Quoranic school entails going to a marabout's house to learn in a large group of multi-age children through memorization and recitation. Other forms include *daaras*, which function as boarding schools, hiring private tutors, or attending Franco-Arabic schools, which are gaining in popularity (see DPRE, 2008). Similar to Khady Diallo's mother, Yaay Adama's mother understands Quoranic instruction as a way of conditioning one's mind for school learning. As she stated, if you attend Quoranic school, *"mooy ubi sa xel. Dina ubi sa mémoire. /* it would open up your mind. Open up your memory" *(Interview).* Four of five focus group students indicated receiving Quoranic instruction at some point in their lives:

- Yaay Adama's parents pay for individual Quoranic instruction within their home;

- Khady Diallo used to study the Quoran during vacation in the eastern part of Senegal with her grandfather prior to his death;
- Ndeye Aicha used to study the Quoran in the summers when she was 4 or 5;
- Abou Ba continues to attend Quoranic school throughout the school year, either on the weekend or after school.

In general, parents see great worth in children participating in Quoranic instruction. Moreover, it seems that parents may perceive Quoranic schools as having greater cultural resonance than formal French schools. As the Director explained to me, while parents in this town may have resisted formal schooling out of fears that it would decrease children's respect of parents, this is not the case for Quoranic schools (2nd Interview). I will further explore religious instruction as it relates to schooling in Chapters 7 and 8 below.

I will close this section with one final quote from a teacher that brings into focus the tension that may exist for some people between more African systems of education and formal French schooling. When asked how children spend their time prior to coming to school, Monsieur Sy stated:

> *On le laisse à la maison. Souvent, il leurs accompagne à la mer. Souvent, ils les accompagnent aux champs, parce qu'il y avait des jardins à côté. Bon, ou bien, on les laissait comme ça. Si vous allez dans le village [inaudible] il n'y a pas mal de gosses qui trainent. Il n'ont pas d'éducation...On peut pas parler de l'éducation dans ce sens-là. Oui. Education, c'est d'avoir un objectif. Pour éduquer quelqu'un, on a l'objectif de faire un enfant qui est comme "ça," mais là, non, non, non. Là, l'enfant est laissé à lui-même. L'enfant, tu as même...bon...maintenant, à la faveur de l'âge, il va aller à la pêche. Il va aller au jardin pour aller cultiver des légumes. C'est comme ça. Mais, il n'y avait pas d'éducation proprement dite - une éducation bien structurée, non.* / They leave them at home. Often, they accompany them to the sea. Often, they accompany them to the fields, because there were gardens nearby. Well, or rather, they leave them like that. If you go into the village [inaudible], there's not a bad number of kids just sitting around.

> They don't have an education...You can't talk about education in this way. Yes. Education, it's having an objective. To educate someone, you have the objective to form a child who is like "this," but there, no, no, no. There, the child is left to himself. The child, you even...well...now, as they get older, they go fishing. He'll go to the garden to cultivate vegetables. That's how it is. But, there wasn't "education," proper - a well structured education, no. *(Interview)*

Monsieur Sy unambiguously attributes formal schooling a much higher value than home educational activities. Similarly, he indicated during our interview that he also greatly respects Muslim education and, in his free time, helps manage a Franco-Arabic school (Interview). Moreover, this passage specifically critiques Lebous practices existent within this particular community. As my findings of home learnings align with characteristics of African educational systems as presented in the literature, such criticisms constitute a challenge to that system and, perhaps, a call for continued evolution away from that system and its Indigenous knowledge. I will explore other examples of how teachers both support and challenge local culture below, and in Chapter 8 specifically.

Physical Discipline

Furthermore, many parents included corporal punishment within their repertoire of childrearing practices. This example is particularly significant, as it has echoes within the schooling system, as I explore in Chapter 5. The following comment provides insight into how parents may understand hitting as a form of punishment:

> *Ñu door parce que xalé yi, moom mu mel noonu. Yenn sais, nga door kenn saax, dina taax kennen du def. Parce que des fois dina ci am, bien vrai que c'est très rare. Mais, aussi, mennul ci ñakk quoi. Lool lanu giis.* / We beat kids because that's the way they are. Sometimes hitting one will keep another from doing something. Because it happens sometimes, even though it's very rare. But sometimes, you can't avoid it. That's how we see it. *(Ndeye Aicha's Father, Interview)*

In this parent's commentary, he justifies hitting by children's nature. Nonetheless, while many parents describe hitting children as commonplace and often necessary, they also argued for restraint. For instance, like other participants, Yaay Adama's mother, explained how she prefers speaking with her children than hitting them and she concludes that too much hitting may render it an ineffective tool (Interview). Interestingly enough, even Ndeye Aicha's father, quoted above, described how his own father only hit him once and that was when he disrespected the Quoran, considered a grave offense. I will return to the subject of physical discipline as it relates to schooling in a later section on implicit manifestations of culture in Chapter 5.

Summary

In the above paragraphs, I have provided information that will contextualize the data and arguments presented in the remaining chapters. I began by showing that both children and adults participate in a number of diverse activities that span the spectrum of traditional and modern activities. While many of the activities surround the town's fishing industry both parents and children also participate in unrelated activities, such as working for Dakar's main bus company, raising goats and pigeons, or taking karate classes. In addition, I explore various cultural activities practiced within the town, paying particular attention to those that may be described as Indigenous knowledges. Many of these examples align with the literature presented in Chapter 2. I identified four categories of Indigenous knowledges: 1) fishing, agriculture, and livestock activities; 2) oral traditions; 3) spiritual activities; and 4) healing practices. Within this section, I also emphasized how there are variations in people's adherence to and support of these activities.

Lastly, I presented various conceptions and approaches that relate to how parents may educate and raise their children within the home. While many parents described activities that support forms of African education presented in Chapter 2, I also emphasized how a number of parents articulated that formal schooling is most important to educating children. I close with a brief description of corporal punishment as another technique that parents may use at home. Many of the topics presented within this chapter will resurface in the data and analyses I present in Chapters 5 through 8.

In all of these descriptions, I attempt to paint a typical but nuanced picture of the community in order to better ascertain student realities. These examples underline the complex, multiple, and fluid nature of culture. As I move forward with my argument in subsequent chapters, I will continue to present this school and community as I encountered it, full of compelling intricacies, contradictions, and oppositions.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICIT CULTURAL PRESENCE AT SCHOOL

> *Cependant certains aspects de la leçon restent typiquement sénégalais. C'est le cas de l'interaction entre élèves, l'interaction maitre élèves, les exemples produits par les élèves sont presque tous tirés du milieu et du vécu des élèves. /* Nonetheless, certain aspects of the lesson remain typically Senegalese. This is the case for interactions among students, interactions between the teacher and students, and the student responses are almost all taken from students' lived experiences and their environment.
>
> (Research Associate, Reflection)

> *Je suis là pour les enseigner quelque chose mais je suis aussi leur parent. On est de la même génération. On est des amis. On est frère et soeur. On est ami, etc., etc. Donc, c'est pour leur permettre, en tout cas, d'avoir une idée sur moi, leur montrer que d'abord, l'école c'est une famille. On est ensemble. En suite, on commence la leçon./* I am here to teach them something but I am also their relative. We are of the same generation. We are friends. We are brothers and sisters. We are friends, etc., etc. So, in order to allow them, in any case, to have an idea about who I am, and to show them that school is first of all family. We are together. And then, we start the lesson.
>
> (Monsieur Ndiaye, 1st grade teacher, Interview)

> *Si, par exemple, la cravache n'a pas étée utilisé à la maison, à l'école aussi, on peut ne pas l'utiliser. Mais, malheureusement, à la maison, l'enfant ne connaît que ça. Donc, arrivé à l'école, on est obligé quand même, eh?, de l'utiliser en peu. /* If, for example, the whip wasn't used at home, we wouldn't use it at school either. But, unfortunately, at home, children don't know anything but that. So, once at school, we are even obligated, uh?, to use it a little.
>
> (Director, 1st Interview)

The culture of the school grounds at this one peri-urban school reflects a shared Senegalese culture in many ways. Most obviously, various organized cultural activities take place at the school each year that reinforce cultural elements. These activities include *Simba,* gatherings where people are dressed as lions and interact with the audience in frightful and humorous ways; *journée thiossane*, a cultural day in which students are encouraged to dress in "traditional" attire; and lastly mardi gras, the day proceeding the beginning of lent. While this last day is not a formerly organized event, a

handful of students and one zealous teacher regularly dress in "traditional" cultural attire on this day. All three of these activities package local cultures and present them to students in a way that is sanctioned by the school.

In addition to these organized activities, Senegalese culture is present within the school grounds in more informal and pervasive ways. Perhaps most apparent, Wolof, a vehicle for local culture, is spoken routinely on the school grounds, both inside and outside of classrooms. Yet, many other manifestations of Senegalese cultures are also evident. For instance, teachers insist upon greeting each other and other staff members, even if someone is in the middle of teaching or a meeting. Although one teacher expressed that this was disruptive to their work, she also admitted that greeting holds such importance within their culture that such interruption is unavoidable (Fieldnotes). The commentary that the culture on the school grounds reflects the local cultures may be obvious. Despite what is written in the literature about schooling following the French model and being alienating and distancing, one would rarely expect walking into a Senegalese school to be like walking off a plane into a French institution. This study contributes to the literature in providing a thick description of the ways in which Senegalese culture may be visible within the school grounds. Later chapters will address incorporating cultures and Indigenous knowledges within lessons and formal teaching. Here, I concentrate on the less formal interactions that take place at the school. These observations also provide the context for understanding subsequent chapters.

While there are innumerable examples of how shared Senegalese culture permeates the school grounds, in this chapter, I focus on five main illustrations: 1) use of Wolof; 2) how teachers and students exhibit a sense of family; 3) expressions of

solidarity; 4) manifestations of Islamic influence; and 5) corporal punishment as an echo of home discipline and Quoranic education. Now, I turn my attention to the first way in which Senegalese culture is present within the informal interactions of the school environment: how the school largely functions through the use of Wolof.

Prominent Use of Wolof

Language is obviously a vehicle for cultural reinforcement and encouragement. For this reason, it is no surprise that the French language served as the "bedrock" of French colonial practices and that it is still noted as one of the greatest heritages of the French colonial enterprise (Diallo, 2010, p. 2). Given that French remains the language of instruction (LOI) of formal schools, including the school that is the focus of this study, one might expect that French language would dominate with limited use of national languages. Moreover, teachers and parents continue to view the school as a French enterprise. This was evident from interviews, in which participants refer to formal schooling as "*l'école Française* / French school." One teacher even shared her perception that in spite of themselves, "*ce que nous vivons, c'est à la Française* / how we live is French" (Madame Diallo, 3rd grade, Interview). However, my research shows that Wolof is used prominently by both staff and students throughout the school grounds, extending even into classroom lessons. While I will illustrate in detail the presence of Wolof within instruction in chapter 6, in this chapter, I focus on the use of Wolof outside of direct instruction.

As a result of my time at the research site, I concluded that the school largely functions in Wolof. Indeed, I wrote the following in one of my reflections: "it seems that

only teaching tasks take place in French" (Fieldnotes). While it would be possible that most school interactions - specifically amongst school personnel - could occur in French, as all teachers presumably speak a high enough level of French to accomplish necessary administrative tasks, in actuality, Wolof clearly dominates. For example, the Director speaks with his staff largely in Wolof. Incidentally, he also uses Sereer when he speaks to Madame Diouf, who is also natively Sereer. The Director's use of Wolof includes greetings in the morning and when taking leave, as well as his directions to teachers. The latter includes instructions like "go to class" (Fieldnotes). In discussing administrative issues with teachers, I also observed that many of these discussions occurred in Wolof, for example, when teachers came into the Director's office to ask for permission to miss class for the *Gammu*, the religious pilgrimage that occurred early on in my data collection (Interview notes). Similarly, the Director often used Wolof when he interacted with students. To illustrate, during an interview with the Director in his office, a student came in looking for a key. She asked for the key in Wolof, to which the Director responded in Wolof (Interview #2).

Perhaps most interesting, one teacher also described how professional meetings and even professional development trainings often feature Wolof as a language of expression. For instance, when I asked Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher) whether in general the use of Wolof is permitted by inspectors, he explained:

> *Même en formation avec nos inspecteurs-là. Quand on s'explique, souvent on glisse le Wolof à l'intérieur. Parce que ça permet de mieux capter l'information. Il y en a qui comprennent très rapidement quand tu parles le Wolof. Mais, s'ils comprennent quand tu parles le Français mais quand tu parles le Wolof c'est mieux. Ils vont comprendre.* / Even in trainings with our inspectors. When they explain, they often slip Wolof in. Because that allows people to better capture the information. There are some people who understand very quickly when you speak

> in Wolof. Even if they understand when you speak in French but when you speak in Wolof, it's better. They will understand. (1st Interview)

This commentary is especially significant given that the speaker is Monsieur Diouf (host teacher). He is a 6th grade teacher and one of the highest ranking of all the teaching staff. He also has his Baccalaureate degree, which has recently become the new standard for primary school teacher qualifications. As a 6th grade teacher, one would expect that he speaks mainly French within the classroom, however, my findings will show that like his colleagues in other grades, Monsieur Diouf also uses Wolof within his teaching. I will return to this point in Chapter 6. If Monsieur Diouf expresses a preference for Wolof as a medium of communication, it is likely the case for his colleagues and even more likely for students, who are just beginning to learn French. Furthermore, his commentary positions teachers as learners within the trainings. As he describes, they understand best when Wolof is used. Nonetheless, not all people share this opinion. In my conversation with retired school inspector, Monsieur Kane, he acknowledged that Wolof is often used in trainings but that it should not be the case. After all, if teachers rely on Wolof, how are they going to teach French to students? (Skype Interview)

I argue here that Wolof is used prominently at this current school for non-instructional tasks including greetings between teaching staff, instructions from the Director to teachers and students, and even within professional development settings. While a quantitative tally of Wolof utterances versus French utterances was beyond the scope of this present paper, the amount of Wolof used was surprising given Senegal's Francophile history, as well as anecdotal experiences of former students. Moreover, as this school is located in an extension of Dakar, the country's capital city, where there is

greater access to French language materials, French-speaking administration, and occupations, one might have expected to hear more French than in other areas of the country. This prominent use of Wolof provides the context for understanding many of the other interactions that I present throughout this dissertation. For instance, Wolof is often used when joking with students, providing them with advice, and performing discipline. It is also used to express notions that individuals cannot express in French. For instance, Madame Diouf (4th grade teacher) began the class that I was observing by asking students if they knew where to find *bunt u mara,* a plant used in healing (Fieldnotes). While Madame Diouf, who natively speaks Sereer, seemed unsure of the Wolof word, repeating it using multiple pronunciations, she clearly understood its usage and this was shared by responding students. While this was a tangent not linked to ensuing lesson content, the brief interaction is significant for this study as it directly addressed healing practices, a typical expression of Indigenous knowledges. A student responded that the plant grew around his house and that he would bring her some. When I pressed Madame Diouf during our interview whether or not such knowledge is addressed by lessons, she said that it was not. This and other examples illustrate how many of the implicit manifestations of cultures that I explore in this chapter occur in Wolof. It also provides further evidence of overlapping Indigenous knowledges. I turn now to other ways that cultures are present within the school grounds.

Sense of School as Family

In addition to the use of national languages, a shared Senegalese culture permeates the school atmosphere in many ways, including fostering a palpable sense of

family among school personnel, students, and across these categories. In order to provide further context, it is important to underline that it is a common practice for teachers to move with their class as students progress throughout the grades. For instance, a teacher may begin with a group and continue as their teacher from first grade through sixth grade. Monsieur Diouf (host teacher) has been the exception as he was in his seventh continuous year as a sixth-grade teacher at the time of my research, presumably because of his experience in preparing students to take the end-of-cycle exam. Many teachers explained to me that they preferred to remain with a group of students that they had already initiated into their teaching and classroom management style rather than having to get used to a new group. It also was clear that teachers developed ties with students over these extended periods as their instructor.

Beyond this example of teachers progressing with their students, how the school atmosphere promotes a sense of family in other ways will be the focus of this section. Notably, the notion of family serves as a framework for interpretation as teachers invoke it as a metaphor and engage students in a commonly shared discourse. Many teachers refer to their relationship with students using family terms, for example. Additionally, outside family relationships among students lead to a fluidity of movement between siblings' classrooms that teachers generally tolerate. Furthermore, in alluding to family, teachers attempt to build relationships of both trust and hierarchy with students. I will explore these issues in detail below.

My research has revealed that many teachers use a family discourse to refer to their relationships with students. For instance, some teachers refer to students as relatives or as their children. One teacher, for example, referred to her students as "*suma njaboot* /

my brood" when inquiring with the local copier if her students' textbooks were ready (Madame Ndoye, Fieldnotes). As further illustration, I repeat here a passage, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, from an interview with Monsieur Ndiaye (1st grade). At this point in the interview, he was describing how he often begins a lesson with a story to make students laugh. He described that in doing so, he demonstrates the following to his class:

> *Je suis là pour les enseigner quelque chose mais je suis aussi leur parent. On est de la même génération. On est des amis. On est frère et soeur. On est ami, etc., etc. Donc, c'est pour leur permettre, en tout cas, d'avoir une idée sur moi, leur montrer que d'abord, l'école c'est une famille. On est ensemble. En suite, on commence la leçon.* / I am here to teach them something but also because I'm their relative. We are of the same generation. We are friends. We are brothers and sisters. We are friends, etc., etc. So, it's to allow them, in any case, to have an idea about who I am, and to show them first of all, that school is a family. We are here together. And then, I begin the lesson. (Monsieur Ndiaye, 1st grade teacher, Interview)

This passage also reveals some of the values related to Monsieur Ndiaye's understanding of family: that families support one another, and that they may provide an outlet for having fun and relating to one another. While certainly, Monsieur Ndiaye makes use of the authority he holds over his students as their teacher, his comments also convey a sense of camaraderie and sense of shared destiny.

As I have foreshadowed above, another manifestation of the palpable sense of family at this school is how outside connections are recognized and tolerated by teachers as students seem to walk freely into each other's classrooms. In these cases, students do not request permission from the teacher in the classroom. When I shared my preliminary analyses with teachers, some teachers explained to me that students may come in and sit with a sibling when their class was canceled or if they got out of class and the other's class was continuing. Of course, "sibling" here often refers to the more collective usage

of the term, which expands to include cousins, neighbors, namesake's children, etc. During my time in classrooms, I regularly saw students standing at the door or windows as teachers went over a lesson. Frequently, students came directly into a classroom to get missing school supplies (pencils, books, notebooks, etc.) or to bring an item to a brother or sister. Madame Diouf (4th grade teacher) explained that often a younger child will go to an older child's class if they forgot something they needed for school. Similarly, older children often bring snack money, bread or other food items into their younger siblings' classrooms if their class got out early (Fieldnotes). Monsieur Sy (Veteran floating teacher) commented that such behavior demonstrates "*l'esprit de partage* / sense of sharing" that exists within the school environment, and which is reminiscent of the larger culture (Interview).

Overwhelmingly, it seems that the teachers did not mind the intrusion of siblings entering their classrooms, and they continued on seamlessly with their lessons. Madame Diouf (4th grade) may have been the only exception to this trend. In her *Vivre ensemble /* Living together lesson on "politeness," she addressed this topic directly saying that brothers and sisters should wait outside and if they do go inside the classroom they should at least greet the teacher and the other students. Otherwise, she said, students are being impolite (Fieldnotes). Indeed, when I discussed this issue with Alfa, my research colleague, who was a high school teacher at the time, he acknowledged the practice as commonplace. He also added that a teacher should never prevent a sibling from coming into a classroom because it is impossible to know what the reasoning is and it may be important. Surely, in a resource-poor environment like this one, this practice of allowing siblings to fluidly enter classrooms may be an adaptation that allows learning to continue

rather than face repeated interruptions. It is also interesting to note that when students are already crowded in the classrooms, there seems to still be room for these guests. (See picture below.)

Figure 5.1: Picture: Older female student visitor in a 1st grade classroom

Furthermore, calling upon family references also allows teachers to engage students in a familiar and culturally privileged discourse. In some cases, teachers seem to use these references to promote trust and to be able to engage students in sensitive subjects, like appropriate dress, menstruation cycles, and teen pregnancy. In these instances, teachers asked students to put aside their teacher role and to pretend they were having a conversation with their mothers. During an interview with Madame Diagne (Arabic teacher) she explained,

> *...di leen naan toujours, 'dingeen ma xol comme seen yaay. Sunu waxtaan, comme seen yaay. Dingeen dindi "Ya Seyda" ba paré, te tegg ko fa, ngeen def ma comme seen yaay moo leen conseiller.' /* ...saying this to them all the time, 'you need to see me like your mother. If we are having a discussion, like your mother. You'll get rid of "Madame" already and put it aside. Take me as your mother who would be giving you advice.' (Interview)

Similarly, Madame Ka (6th grade) led an after-school discussion with female sixth-graders and middle school students in order to call their attention to the problem of early pregnancy as part of a development project. In her opening to the session, she stipulated that 1) she would be speaking Wolof, and 2) that she would be speaking with them like a mother speaks with her daughters, not like a teacher. She asked them to relax and to feel free to ask questions or make comments (Fieldnotes). Teachers invoking this sort of relationship represent an attempt to recognize and mediate the authority that a teacher has over students within Senegalese society. It also underscores the caring, nurturing, and advising relationship mothers are expected to have with their daughters, as addressed in an earlier chapter.

Lastly, the metaphor of family allows teachers a framework of interpretation. For example, Madame Diouf's current fourth-grade class had been taught by an older male teacher who went into retirement the previous year. In describing her class to me, she complained about their lack of discipline. She reasoned that the previous teacher had installed a grandfather's sort of discipline in the class, referring to a joking and indulgent relationship characteristic of grandparents with their grandchildren in Senegalese society. She explained:

> *Seen Monsieur, li la leen tamm. Mais din... Comme mutoon na leen maam, yaar u maam daal. Dina leen baay ci seen yiff u plaisir bopp. Suma leen begge forcer, yeen dinanu ne "Madame, dafa soxor." Am na li maa wañi ndank ndank. Mais, duma ñow rekk begg tegg ak dindi li ak doolé. /* Their teacher, this is what he got them used to. But he... As he was old enough to be their grandfather, a grandfather's discipline, you know. He would let them do whatever they wanted. If I tried to force it, they would say, "Madame is mean." I'm lessening some things little by little. But, I didn't come in just wanting to forcibly install this and get rid of that. (Madame Diouf, 4th grade teacher, Interview).

By referring to family relationships, Madame Diouf frames the former teacher's approach to discipline within a cultural context, rather than referring to a lack of professional skill or effort.

Framing events within the family discourse also allows teachers to invoke the cultural hierarchy and respect associated with older relatives when teachers feel it is appropriate. I present here an illustration that also reveals how teachers saw my role at school and how they supported my presence with students. During my time observing Monsieur Diouf's sixth grade class, the teacher did a physical education lesson, which required that everyone change into gym clothes and then go into the school's courtyard for activities. The school's courtyard was located in the middle of all the classrooms and was clearly visible to all. As a participant observer, I also changed into gym clothes and did the warm-up activities alongside students. The next day, Madame Diouf told me excitedly how she disciplined her students for inappropriate remarks when they saw me running with the students. It seems that her students said phrases such as "*toubab bi de dow!* / the white woman is running!" Her response was to "*door naa leen ba begg de! Ne naa leen, 'seen yaay ndax men nanu dow?'* / beat them until they wanted to die! I said to them, 'can your mothers run?'" (Fieldnotes). While the children's comments did not impress me as particularly inappropriate, Madame Diouf found them to be insolent. She invoked the respect and hierarchy associated with children and their parents in comparing me to the children's mothers. Later, she repeated her commentary to two other teachers, Madame Diallo (3rd grade) and Madame Sarr (3rd grade), both of whom approved of Madame Diouf's reaction. This illustration demonstrates how teachers may interpret events according to a family framework and how they reinforce a sense of family in their

explanations to students. The mere fact that the teacher shared this incident with me also seemed to indicate her support of my work at the school.

Solidarity

In addition to a sense of family, this research at this one peri-urban school revealed a sense of solidarity among teachers and with students. Collective identity and support align with many aspects of Senegalese culture, and find resonance in the literature on Indigenous knowledges. This section below provides illustrations of the various ways that this solidarity is evident within the school grounds and how it sets the stage for the learning that takes place there. Here, I concentrate on two principle themes: solidarity among teachers, and teachers caring for students in ways well beyond what might be expected in other classrooms around the world.

Solidarity Expressed Among School Staff

Throughout my time at site, the adults at school displayed numerous ways in which they form a cohesive staff, including the director, teachers, security guard and a cleaning woman. Perhaps the most evident example is how on Fridays during the morning recess, the staff gather to share a drink together and close with a prayer for the continued success of the school. Responsibility for purchasing drinks rotates in a determined manner throughout the staff, beginning with the Director, those who work principally in the courtyard (security guard and cleaning woman) and then moving through the classrooms (Fieldnotes). The prayer is conducted according to Muslim fashion, and I saw teachers alternating among themselves as to who would say the prayer that week. To further illustrate this practice of Friday gatherings and prayer, I present the

words of Monsieur Sy (Veteran floating teacher). His commentary provides an overview not only of this Friday practice, but also of the many ways that the teachers have created a sense of solidarity among themselves. His commentary also points out how he feels this is unique to this school:

> *On fait des prières. Bon, d'ailleurs, on dit qu'à l'école, c'est ça qui a fait que l'école est celle qu'elle est devenu aujourd'hui - à cause de les prières qu'on fait le vendredi. Donc, tous les vendredis, on fait des prières. Mais, il y a cet esprit de solidarité aussi. Les gens - là, vraiment, les gens sont formidables! Moi, quand je dis, "j'ai pas de frontières, je joue avec tout le monde"...Vraiment, c'est...L'ambiance est bonne. Et le travail aussi, c'est bon. Il y a même... qu'avant quand quelqu'un... avant un évènement, ou quelque chose de bien, il vient, il paye la boisson à tout le monde. Ou bien, quelqu'un qui vient, il paye le petit déjeuner à tout le monde. Ou bien, on cotise. On achète un boeuf. On se partage. Tout ça, c'est, c'est, on l'a fait ici. On a fait ça ici. C'est ça qui soude encore. Parce qu'on dit "partager un repas, ça crée des liens." Alors, donc, le thé là, depuis quelques années, c'est là. Quand les gens ont le temps. Cheikh Thiam fait le thé. Il sert à tout le monde. Ca me - ça rend le travail moins difficile. On le sent pas tellement. Parce que quand on sort, on se taquine.* / We say prayers. Well, in fact, they say at the school that it's what has made the school what it has become today - because of the Friday prayers. But, there is a sense of solidarity too. People - here, really, people are wonderful! Me, what I say, "I don't have any boundaries, I joke around with everyone"...Really, it's...it's a good ambiance. And the work is good, too. There is even...when before when someone...before an event, or something that was good, he came, he bought drinks for everyone. Or even, when he comes, he buys breakfast for everyone. Or, we chip in. We buy a cow. We split it. All that, it's, it's, we've done that here. We've done that here. It's what brings us even closer together. Because they say, "sharing a meal creates relationships." So, then, the tea here, it's been here for a few years now. When people have time, Cheikh Thiam [security guard] makes tea. He serves it to everyone. That makes me - it renders the work less difficult. We don't feel it as much. Because when we come out [of the classrooms], we tease each other. (Monsieur Sy, Veteran floating teacher, Interview)

In this passage above, Monsieur Sy raises a number of examples of how he feels that the school staff have developed a deep camaraderie amongst themselves. My observations corroborated many of his comments. For instance, while gathering during recess, Madame Diallo (3rd grade) made the proposition to colleagues of contributing money to split a cow (Fieldnotes), just as Monsieur Sy described above. Similarly, at all

times of day, Senegalese tea was regularly visible at the school, including during morning classes, but most commonly in the afternoon. Senegalese tea refers to *attaya*, a black tea that is served in three rounds, the first being strongest and then becoming progressively lighter and often infused with mint. Tea is served in small glasses and is distributed by rotating glasses among drinkers. Attaya can be found in almost all settings where people come together, particularly in homes, but also in workplaces. It represents a traditional activity that is shared among many ethnic groups and adapts to many environments. During my research activities, the distribution of tea regularly interrupted interviews as well as classes. Students often delivered the tea, being sent by the adult making it. During one of my interviews with the school Director, he was organizing tea distribution at the same time as we were discussing. His instructions to a student about to which teachers he should distribute the tea remain audible on the recording.

Additional examples of Senegalese cultural elements serving to solidify professional bonds among teachers were also present during my time at school. For instance, Monsieur Sy (veteran floating teacher) also spoke of how the Director's youngest son is named after a former colleague. Monsieur Sy underlined this example as quintessential evidence of respect that is formed among people at the school (Interview). The practice of naming children after people, a namesake or *turundur*, is a very common Senegalese tradition. Another instance that I highlight occurred on my first visit to the school. I witnessed a female teacher, Madame Diallo, collecting monthly contributions to an informal savings circle organized among staff (Fieldnotes), known in Senegal as *tontine* (French) and *natt* (Wolof). *Tontines* are a longstanding informal financial practice

and arguably, an example of Indigenous knowledges (see Balkenhol & Gueye, 1994; Kane, 2002).

One final illustration of how Senegalese culture enacted among teachers permeates the school environment was the predominance of visits to the school by former colleagues. During my time at the school, I regularly observed former teachers returning to visit their previous colleagues - either after having retired or having moved on to other posts. Sometimes, the colleagues visited during breaks, but there were also occasions when they went right up to classroom doors and interrupted instruction in order to say hello (Fieldnotes). Many former students also imitated this practice, returning to their previous primary school classrooms on their way home from the middle school. Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher) found this to be particularly rewarding and beneficial for his students. He described to me how he felt that these students serve as models for his current students, especially his sixth-graders preparing to take the end-of-cycle exam (Fieldnotes).

Solidarity Teachers Express to Students through Care

In addition to the many ways that the school staff express solidarity among themselves, teachers also demonstrated care for students that aligns with a sense of collective responsibility and childraising, so common among many African societies. These examples reinforce the notion of family discussed in an earlier section. Below, I present a few poignant examples of that care. While I believe that cultural underpinnings motivate many of these efforts, teachers' roles as well as a resource-poor environment are clearly other contributing factors. In these examples, teachers provide resources and

advice. While teachers also provided examples of more universal issues, such as physical or sexual abuse that they have addressed through their work, these instances below go beyond these more universal issues. These examples show how teachers use their own funds to address the needs of students, oftentimes helping them to obtain food. The last example demonstrates a teacher helping a student to access health care. All of these illustrations represent collective responsibility for younger members of society.

While this issue did not come up in all conversations with teachers, two teachers mentioned providing money directly to students who were lacking in food and supplies. In speaking with Madame Ndoye (2nd grade teacher), for instance, about the socio-economic conditions in which students live, she explained to me that many students do not have necessary funds to meet all their needs. She went on to explain that she often gives students money to buy breakfast. In addition, she has provided money for students to obtain photocopies of the compilation of texts that teachers have arranged with a local copier (Fieldnotes). Madame Ndoye also pointed to how Madame Ka (6th grade teacher) regularly provides breakfast to *talibé* students. I now turn to Madame Ka's own account of her practice.

In most Senegalese streets, and particularly in the sprawling urban capital, one might see *talibés*, young boys affiliated with a religious leader who are asking for alms. The boys need to bring a certain amount of money back to their *marabout* before they can move on to other activities. At this particular school, Madame Ka has identified three boys who are *talibés.* During our interview, she explains how she has come to support these three boys in order to help them succeed in their studies:

> *Vous voyez - ki - le pain-là que vous voyez-là...J'ai des enfants talibés qui viennent à l'école-là sans prendre le petit déjeuner. Donc, je prépare. Je peux pas*

faire ça pour tout le monde. Mais, je fais ça. lls sont trois. Il y a deux qui sont dans ma classe et l'autre qui est dans la classe de Monsieur Ndiaye. Pour chacun, chaque jour, je paie. Je leur paie le petit déjeuner et du sucre. Ici, ils sont nombreux ici - ils sont nombreux à venir à l'école sans manger. Et par fois, les après-midi, ils viennent. Eux - les après-midi, quand ils doivent aller et revenir le soir, il faut qu'ils attendent d'abord la pitance pour pouvoir manger. Vous voyez? C'est difficile...Je les ai trouvé ici. Quand je suis venue ici, je les ai trouvé ici. L'année dernière, bon, chaque fois, je savais, j'avais un certain ki par rapport à eux. C'est cette année-là que j'ai su. Un jour, ils sont venu. Je les ai appellé. Ils venaient toujours en retard. Une fois je les ai appellé. Je leur ai dit, "mais pour quoi vous venez toujours en retard?" Ils me disent, "Madame, on va demander l'aumône. En suite, on vient à l'école." Pendant la récreation, ils habitent loin! [Snaps her fingers with arm up showing distance.] Ils habitent loin. Donc, ils retournent là-bas à 11 heure [teachers greeting], ils rétournent là-bas pour prendre le petit-déjeuner. Je leurs ai dis, "Non. Maintenant..." ils pouvaient pas aller tous les jours [name of neighboring town]. Ils habitent loin! Je leur ai dis, "Maintenant, je vais assurer votre petit-déjeuner, comme ça vous allez venir tôt le matin." Même ça, il vient un peut en retard. Mais au moins, pendant la récreation, ils restent. / You see - the thing - the bread here that you see here...I have *talibé* children who come to this school without having breakfast. So, I take care of it. I can't do it for everyone. But, I do this. There are three of them. There are two who are in my class and the other is in Monsieur Ndiaye's class. I pay for each of them every day. I buy them breakfast and sugar. Here, there are many [students] here - there are many of them who come to school without eating. And sometimes, they come in the afternoon. Them - the afternoons when they have to go home and come back in the evening, they have to first wait for the pittance [collection of food] before they can eat. You see? It's difficult...I found them here. When I can here, I found them here. Last year, well, each time, I knew, I had a certain thing [premonition] for them. It's this year that I found out what it was. One day, they came. I called them over. They used to always come very late. One time I called them over. I said to them, "but why are you always so late to school?" They said to me, "Madame, we need to ask for alms. After that, we come to school." During recess - they live far away! {Snaps her fingers with arm up showing distance.] They live far. So, they get back there at 11 [teachers greeting], they go back there to get their breakfast. I told them, "No. Now..." they couldn't be going every day to [name of neighboring town]. They live far away! I said to them, "Now, I am going to take care of your breakfast, that way you can come early in the morning." Even with that, they still come a little late. But at least, during recess, they stay. (Madame Ka, 6th grade teacher, Interview)

This rich passage illustrates other elements of Senegalese culture. For example, Madame Ka made this decision and had this discussion with the students without involving their guardians. She clearly saw providing them with breakfast as a positive gesture and one

that she could take without involving a parent. This may indicate her sense of shared parenthood for these students. In addition, her giving may also evidence the Muslim practice of providing alms. Many Muslims provide contributions to people daily, whether it is to *talibé* children, beggars, or other people in need. These sacrifices are considered to be good works and may help people improve their chances of good luck.

In addition to providing food or supplies to students who are in need, teachers also spoke about using their knowledge to help students secure health care. During one recess, I observed Madame Sy (veteran floating teacher) providing such advice to a student. They spoke to one another in their first language, Pulaar. The teacher later explained to me that the student has diabetes and that Madame Sy is assisting her in securing public funding for treatment (*aide sociale*) (Fieldnotes). Similarly, Madame Ka (6th grade teacher) spoke about how she also provides students with advice, as well as how she has paid health care fees for students. As she explained:

> *Des fois, tu vois un élève qui est blessé et tu sais que ça peut posser problème. "Tu vas à l'hôpital?" "Non." "Pour quoi tu ne vas pas à l'hôpital?" Il se tait. Il dit que mes parents n'en ont pas. Par fois, j'amène à l'hôpital et je paie l'ordonnance... Donc, en faite c'est des problèmes, quoi. La pauvrété.* / Sometimes, you see a student who is injured and you know that it can be a problem. "Are you going to go to the hospital?" "No." "Why aren't you going to the hospital?" He is quiet. He says that his parents don't have it. Sometimes, I bring [students] to the hospital and I buy the prescribed medication.... So, these are problems, you know. Poverty. (Madame Ka, 6th grade teacher, Interview)

Teachers caring for students in the ways illustrated above may arise due to a number of factors. As I presented in the previous section on sense of family, many teachers do feel a parental relationship towards students and a responsibility to care for them. Many parents also find themselves in difficult situations where they lack the information and perhaps more so, the financial means necessary to optimally care for

their children. Teachers are also considered to have stable and well-paying jobs. As the teachers featured above demonstrate, many of them use their pay to give back to their students and invest in the community. In doing so, they exhibit the collective spirit that the literature on Indigenous knowledges, in particular, discusses. While underlying factors for such behavior are certainly multiple, these instances above provide evidence of ways that the school grounds replicate values and behaviors common to Senegalese people in many other settings. In these ways, Senegalese culture permeates the school grounds. This is an alternative narrative to the images presented in the literature on African education, which often describe students' experiences as alienating and disconnected.

Islamic influence at a Glance

In addition to the school staff's Friday prayer tradition, the influence of the Muslim religion is palpable in many other ways within the environment at this particular school, and represents a layer within Senegalese culture for the majority of the population. The most evident of religious influences is the state-mandated Arabic language and Islamic religious instruction class that meets for two hours each week. I also note that all members of the school staff are Muslim. While during discussions, teachers cited a few instances of teaching Christian students, they also indicated that the student population is overwhelming of Muslim adherence. Of the over 700 students at this school, they estimate that less than 10 students are Christian. This present section briefly addresses two aspects of how Islam influences the more informal interactions that occur on the school grounds: through protective practices just before exam periods, and as evidenced by female students wearing the veil, or hijab. Many other instances will follow in later

sections of this paper that address both formal religious instruction and how Islamic influence is also present in general education lessons.

When speaking with teachers about ways that Senegalese culture may be present at school, one teacher referenced the practice of seeking intervention from a Muslim holy man, known as a *marabout*. Often times, parents seek out this intervention for their children so that they may do well during testing periods. As Madame Sy explained:

> *...A la veille d'examens, c'est parce que vous me parliez de, de, de l'implication de l'Islam, ou bien la culture à l'école, mais toutes les mamans sont sur le [inaudible] pour aller leur chercher un marabout. Il va leur faire quelque chose [laughing] pour que l'enfant soit performant le jour de l'examen. Ca c'est une réalité du milieu. Même, comme ça, à l'ouverture de la classe, il y en a qui vont faire boire à leurs enfants une potion en leur disant "ça aiguise l'intelligence." Tout ça c'est culturel. Ca n'existe pas chez vous. Et même, chez certains sénégalais, ça n'existent pas. Mais, c'est une réalité. /* ...Just before exams - it's because you spoke to me about the, the, the implication of Islam or culture at school, but all of the mothers are on the [inaudible] to find them a marabout. He will do something for them [laughing] so that the child does well the day of the test. It's a reality of this place. Even, like this, at the beginning of the school year, there are people who will make their children drink a potion saying, "this will sharpen your intelligence." All of this is cultural. It doesn't exist where you are from. And it doesn't even exist among certain Senegalese. But, it's a reality. (Veteran floating teacher, 2nd Interview)

This passage provides an example of how people attempt to influence schooling outcomes through religion. Although such actions take place at home and within the community, the implications are for the school grounds. While beyond the scope of this present paper, this comment points to a fascinating practice representative of the syncretism that exists between African religions and Islam in many areas of Senegal (see Giuliano, 2002).

The second illustration of how Islamic beliefs may affect students at school reflects perhaps the most outward demonstration of Muslim adherence, that is, whether a female student wears a head covering or hijab. My assumption had been that the head

covering was a sign of religious conservatism. However, in speaking with teachers and students, I learned that the choice to wear a headscarf was often the manifestation of more practical concerns. As I explained in the methods and design chapter (Chapter 3), Monsieur Diouf (6th grade teacher, host teacher) identified five students to serve in the student focus group based on criteria of diversity of gender, ethnic group, and academic standing. I was somewhat dismayed when all three of the girls in the focus group wore headscarves, as of the over 30 girls in the class, they were the only ones who wore them. I was concerned that this might represent heightened religious conservatism among the focus group participants. However, when I mentioned this issue to Monsieur Diouf, he dismissed my concern, saying that students chose to wear headscarves for multiple reasons including that their friends do it or that the Arabic language teacher may have suggested it. Madame Ndoye (2nd grade teacher) joined us for the end of this conversation, and she echoed Monsieur Diouf's opinions (Fieldnotes). Similarly, while observing Madame Diallo's third-grade class, she made a point to review certain good hygiene practices, including that children comb their hair. She stressed that not taking care of your hair was not a reason to wear a veil (Fieldnotes). This seemed to suggest that girls may choose the veil as an alternative to hairstyling.

I explored this issue further with the girls in focus group during our discussions. I soon learned that only Yaay Adama wore her veil for explicitly religious reasons. In fact, all of her female family members also wore the hijab. For Khady Diallo, she wore the veil some days and not others. She explained that her aunt brought back hair scarves from her pilgrimage to Mecca, which inspired Khady to cover her head as a fashion statement. Similarly, Ndeye Aicha's reasoning seems to be more cosmetic than conservative.

Through discussions with Ndeye Aicha and her father, it became clear that she covers her head because it was shaved. Her father does not approve of young girls wearing hair extensions and it seems that he shaved her head as a punishment. She began wearing the hijab to cover her head as her hair grew back. When asked if she will stop covering her head when her hair grows back, she says "no." She likes it because she does not tire herself out buying fake hair extensions (Focus Group discussions; Interview with Ndeye Aicha's father). Furthermore, neither Khady nor Ndeye Aicha's mothers wear Muslim head coverings.

These examples of parents seeking marabouts' interventions in order to increase children's success on exams and of the reasoning for female students wearing headscarves illustrate complex ways that Islam bears an influence on school happenings. These examples are coupled with many others that arose throughout my research, including teachers making financial contributions to students, teachers' Friday prayer, and the many instances of teachers informally addressing religious instruction in their teaching (see below). Beyond these examples, one of the most intriguing commentaries made throughout my research period was how corporal punishment enacted at the school may represent the heritage of Islamic instruction that takes place in Quoranic schools. I will devote the next and final section of this chapter to an exploration of corporal punishment at this school and its relationship to cultural manifestations.

Corporal Punishment as Cultural Integration

As mentioned in the Chapter 4, corporal punishment, that is, hitting and beating children, known as *door* in Wolof, is a common way of redressing children's behavior

within this particular community and for many people in Senegal. Despite its official ban from primary schools, evident in Article 14 of the 1979 Decree on the organization of elementary education (Sénégal, 1979, p. 5), hitting and whipping children remains a prominent form of discipline at this school. In this chapter, I will present several manifestations of corporal punishment at this one school, accompanied by arguments from teachers and the Director for its continued employment. I will argue that one of the main reasons why teachers and the school director choose to use hitting and whipping, despite its official ban, is that physical punishment remains a common form of discipline at home and, for this reason, continues to be effective in the school environment. In this way, educators deliberately implement local cultural ways of childraising within their teaching practices. In doing so, they bring an African form of education into classrooms that are perceived as "French" in nature.

While I hold the overall assumption that integrating cultural references and Indigenous knowledges within schooling would be beneficial, identifying corporal punishment as cultural presents a dilemma. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to assess whether a practice deemed normative by the society should be implemented in schools when it conflicts with universal understandings of human rights. Rather, the intention of this paper is to explore the ways that this one school provides an education that more closely aligns with student realities than what is described within the literature. Nonetheless, in the interest of transparency of methods and positionality, I need to convey my great discomfort in doing research in an environment where corporal punishment was so widespread and supported by the establishment. As I will discuss below, not all adults in this study understand corporal punishment to be the best means of

discipline. For example, the above background section on childraising presents several parents' caution that beatings should be used sparingly. Moreover, I was indeed quite grateful that Monsieur Diouf (6th grade), whose classroom served as the base for my school activities, never exhibited a whip throughout the research period. He was the only teacher of those that I observed who professed using alternative discipline methods.

In the paragraphs below, I present examples of ways that teachers used corporal punishment with students. When applicable, I include their understandings of its effectiveness and rationale for its usage on the school grounds. I will include Monsieur Diouf's (6th grade, host teacher) disciplinary tactics to provide a counterexample. Two possible conjectures offered by participants locate the origin of beating children in home and Quoranic school practices.

Examples of Corporal Punishment

Physical discipline at the school takes many forms, including the visible or verbal threat of punishment, actually putting students on knees, hitting with hands, sticks and whips (*la cravache)*, and perhaps most controversial, having other students police their classmates using force. I will describe these various manifestations within the paragraphs below.

Educators at this school commonly use physical force as a visible or verbal threat when student behavior is not to their liking. This includes displaying the whip by taking it out of a closet, placing it on a desk, and/or walking around with it in hand. One teacher went to his supply closet to change the whip he was holding for one of a heavier weight (Fieldnotes). Another example is when I regularly observed the School Director carrying

a whip in his hand in the morning to get students into their classrooms (Fieldnotes). During an interview, he added that he uses the whip in the afternoon to make students leave the school grounds at the end of the day (Interview #1). Furthermore, I saw teachers walk across the courtyard with the whip in their hands, or sit with it in their laps as they sat explaining a lesson. Student behavior that garnered such threats included students speaking when they should be working and students not speaking or not participating loudly enough. Teachers also referred to the whip as a threat to motivate students to do their homework and revise their lessons. To illustrate, I present an example of a verbal threat from Monsieur Ndiaye's (1st grade) class, when students were too loud:

> *Pas de bruit ! Noppileen ngiri Yalla! Naka ngeen beugg jenge te doleen degulu ? Walla dangeen beugg ma door lenn?* / No noise! Be quiet for God's sake! How can you want to learn when you don't listen? Or do you want me to beat you? (Fieldnotes)

In speaking with teachers and the school director, many intimated that such threats accompanied by occasional beatings seemed to be effective in maintaining discipline.

Putting students on their knees refers to making students kneel on the hard and uneven concrete floor of the classroom for an extended period of time. I witnessed this form of punishment a few times during my classroom observations, but particularly during interviews with teachers. In requesting interviews with teachers, I asked that they choose the time and place most amenable to them. While some teachers preferred to speak during breaks, others chose to do the interview during my observations while the students did silent work or were asked to sit quietly. It was during such an interview that Madame Sy (Veteran floating teacher) placed a talking student on his knees in front of the class.

My research found that teachers also used their hands and the whip to beat students who were misbehaving. For example, Madame Ndoye (2nd grade teacher) used the whip to hit students' hands, much like the image of a Catholic nun hitting students' hands with rulers. She did this with two groups of students who had been talking while she passed out student notebooks. As she passed out the books, she asked the class leader (*chef de classe*) to line up undisciplined students. The class leader made students kneel on their knees in front of the class. Once Madame Ndoye had finished passing out the notebooks, she told the students to stand up, open their palms, and lashed them with the whip. They then sat back down in their seats, some of them shaking their hands as they walked back between the rows of desks. Other examples that resulted in strikes - either of the hand or the whip - included the following:

- students who got their bags on too early before recess was announced (Monsieur Ndiaye, 1st grade)
- girl speaking with neighbor during lesson (Monsieur Ba, 5th grade)
- boy who was showing off (Monsieur Ba, 5th grade)
- students who were talking (Monsieur Ndiaye, 1st grade)
- when a student had a poor answer (Monsieur Ndiaye, 1st grade)
- a boy who was crying because he was missing his blackboard (Monsieur Ndiaye, 1st grade)
- students who were facing backwards and not paying attention (Monsieur Ndiaye, 1st grade)
- a girl who had reportedly bitten other students (Monsieur Ndiaye, 1st grade) (Fieldnotes)

In addition to these examples, teachers also reported making certain to demonstrate a beating at the beginning of the year to install fear and a disciplinary routine in their classes, whether or not they were with students they had taught in previous classes or not.

In all these cases, students are expected to accept the beating, often times, having to open their bodies to the blows, as when the teacher tells them to lean forward or open their hands so they may be hit. In many cases, students were sitting between the teacher and the wall and there was absolutely no way to escape. The teacher has total control. Crying seemed to exacerbate a teacher's rage, as was obvious in Monsieur Ndiaye's 1st grade class. In one case, it seemed that the more a student reacted, the more blows he received. Note, too, that many of the incidents I present are from Monsieur Ndiaye's first-grade classroom. All of these incidents were from one day of observations. These students are the youngest at school and, according to teachers, the hardest group to teach. Not only are they unfamiliar with French, the LOI, but also they are unaware of school routines. Monsieur Ndiaye also has a reputation as outrageous and unpredictable. It is uncertain whether or not Monsieur Ndiaye's use of physical force with students is representative of other 1st grade teachers.

Another form of beating is well known as "*tendre par quatre /* held out by four" and describes when a teacher calls four students to help in the punishment of another student. Each of the four holds either an arm or leg of the student to be punished. If they are strong enough, they will hold the student off the floor while the teacher whips the student. Otherwise, the student will be held on a table by the four "helpers" while the teacher uses the whip. Although I did not witness this form of punishment, teachers did speak about it. One teacher, Madame Ndoye (2nd grade) threatened a similar punishment

as she said to students in Wolof, "*Bu ma leen degg at, ci kaw table bi laa ko tuddal! /* If I hear you again, I'm laying him/her down on the table!" (Fieldnotes). Monsieur Ba also explained how he uses *tendre par quatre* as a motivator:

> *Mais, se concentrer, apprendre une leçon, là, ça nous pose problèmes. C'est pourquoi parfois, je prend la cravache. Donc, pour leur faire peur. Celui qui ne récite pas, donc je le prend par quatre, etc. C'est pour les pousser à...à...à apprendre leurs leçons et aussi pour préparer la mémoire. /* But, concentrating, learning a lesson, there, we have problems. That's why sometimes, I use the whip. You know, to scare them. Whoever can't recite the lesson, I take him by four, etc. It's order to push them to...to...to learn their lessons and also to prepare their memory. (Monsieur Ba, 5th grade teacher, Interview)

In this case, Monsieur Ba seems to understand physical punishment to serve as a motivator as well as an enhancement to learning, i.e., by opening up one's memory for memorization.

In addition to the *tendre par quatre* tactic, my research found other ways that teachers initiated students in the physical discipline of their classmates. Similar to my interview with Madame Sy (Veteran floating teacher) above, my interview with Madame Sarr (3rd grade) took place in her classroom with her students just after lesson. In this instance, the class leader (*chef de classe*) put undisciplined students on their knees in the front of the classroom with their heads on the wall. The teacher said nothing, seemingly approving this strategy. As further illustration, I also observed students holding whips in front of other classes when their teachers were absent. For instance, on a morning that Madame Ndoye (2nd grade) was an hour late to arrive at school, a student was given the task of policing the class. I waited for Madame Ndoye to arrive at the Director's office. When she arrived, we walked together to the classroom. As we entered, a student, presumably the class leader (*chef de classe*) was walking around the classroom with a whip in hand. Although I was not aware who gave her the whip, presumably a member of

the administration or another teacher sanctioned the situation. As a researcher and mother sensitive to corporal punishment, I felt particularly alarmed by this observation.

However, despite all of these instances of teachers using whips and inflicting physical punishment on students, all teachers knew it was banned. The Director made this very clear in his interview. He said:

> *Mais, ça c'est tout simplement en se cachant, eh? Parce qu'on n'ose pas - avec l'arrivé de l'inspecteur, je vais mettre la cravache comme ça [in the drawer]. Quand l'inspecteur arrive, tu mets ça en bas. Mais, tu es obligé, de temps en temps, de l'utiliser.* / But, that's simply in hiding, right? Because we don't dare do it - when the inspector comes, I put the whip here [in the drawer]. When the inspector comes, you put it down there. But, you are obligated, from time to time, to use it. (Director, 1st Interview)

Similarly, another teacher, Madame Diouf (4th grade), made a point of removing the whip from her table when she asked me to take a picture of her at her teacher's desk. This gesture seemed to indicate that it was not becoming of a teacher to have a whip at hand. Yet, at the same time, my video recording of classroom observations did not seem to deter teachers from using force as the observed examples above demonstrate. Indeed, the majority of these instances are now digitally recorded.

While I did not observe all teachers using force, those that I did not observe using it mentioned that they do hit students as a disciplinary method with one exception. Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher) was the only teacher that clearly expressed to me that he does not hit students. Incidentally, his class was the most attentive and disciplined of all the classes I visited. When I shared my astonishment of this with Monsieur Diouf (6th grade), he responded that it is because of his concerted efforts to establish a relationship with students since the beginning of the year. In addition, Monsieur Diouf is the only teacher who receives a new group of students every year,

instead of following his class as they advance through the grades. This means that he needs to establish his classroom management strategy with a new group of students every year. He explained to me that he does this by having a conversation with students in Wolof, in which he explains that he is not a policeman, nor is he better than the students. He considers students to be "*mes frères* / my brothers [and sisters]." However, he also explains that he expects a certain behavior from the students and requires their respect in class. He says he gives students the choice as to whether or not he uses the whip but he also confided that he loathes the whip *("j'ai horreur de la cravache").* Monsieur Diouf agreed that his strategy seems to work. To illustrate, he proudly showed me a note in the shape of a heart he received from a student last year. He keeps this note in his wallet as a reminder (Fieldnotes).

In addition to the strategy of speaking with students to develop a positive and mutually respective rapport, Monsieur Diouf's class revealed other disciplinary strategies. For instance, when students misbehaved egregiously, he would keep them in his room rather than allow them recess. He also used several tactics that might be considered as humiliating, for instance, comparing students with animals, "*vous êtes des animaux?* / are you animals?," asking them if they are crazy, "*danga duf?*," which is very offensive in Wolof, and making students who did not review their lessons get up in front of the rest of their class (Fieldnotes). Yet, during the time I observed Monsieur Diouf's lessons, all of these strategies were used sparingly. In general, he had an impressive command of his students and an established ambiance of mutual respect, a fact that was not lost on the Director (Fieldnotes). I also should point out that, with the exception of Madame and Monsieur Sy (both Veteran floating teachers) who were close to retirement, Monsieur

Diouf was the highest graded teacher of the pedagogical staff. He was second in command to the School Director and assumed the director's responsibilities in case of absence. He may also have had more training than his other colleagues, perhaps an explanation for his success with alternative methods.

Heritages of Corporal Punishment

Two possible theories may exist for the origin of corporal punishment as a principle part of teachers' classroom management repertoire. Both of these conjectures are rooted in cultural practices and Indigenous knowledges and suggest their crossover into formal schooling. Participants generated these theories. The first of these theories identifies Quoranic education at the origin while the second points to general childraising practices. In regards to the first theory, during my interview with Monsieur Sy (Veteran floating teacher), he identified corporal punishment as the heritage of Quoranic schooling (also see André & Demonsant, 2012). I asked him about community involvement at the school. In response, he described how parents often do not participate actively at school, having full confidence in the religious instructor to whom they have confided their child. Part of the experience of being in a Quoranic school involves being beaten as punishment and is often sanctioned by the parents. As Monsieur Sy describes:

> *Ca, je crois que c'est un message qu'on a eu de l'éducation quoranique, où l'enfant - même là, quand un gosse ne suit pas ou quand il fait des conneries, les parents viennent, ils me disent, "ah oui. Il faut lui taper au mort," parce qu'à l'école quoranique, c'est ce qu'on sait. S'il ne travail pas, il faut le taper. On n'essaye pas de diagnostiquer: "pour quoi l'enfant ne travail pas?" "Pour quoi l'enfant..." pourquoi, pourquoi, pourquoi, pourquoi?" On dit seulement, "il faut taper." Donc. c'est, c'est, c'est - ils sont des résurgences de l'éducation traditionnelle.* / That, I believe is a message coming from Quoranic education where children - even here, when a kid doesn't pay attention or when he/she acts up, parents come. They say to me, "oh yes. You should beat him to death,"

> because that's what they know from Quoranic school. If they don't work, you must hit them. They don't try to find a diagnosis: "why did the child not do the work?" "Why did the child..." "why, why, why, why?" They simply say, "you have to beat them." So, it's, it's, it's...they are holdovers from traditional education. (Monsieur Sy, Veteran floating teacher, Interview)

Here, Monsieur Sy makes a direct connection between parents' expectations for formal schooling and their expectations about Quoranic schools, which have been existent in Senegal for a long time. While no other participants seemed to affirm this rationale, I nonetheless find it intriguing and perhaps even compelling.

The Director provided the second theory, that educators use corporal punishment because it mimics effective childraising techniques used at home.

> *C'est à dire que l'enseignant, il est obligé même, bon, de, peut-être, comment on peut le dire encore? De penser un peu à dire, à la maison. "Peut-être Papa réussit avec ça, donc je vais essayer quand même, de l'utiliser." Mais, ça c'est tout simplement en se cachant, eh? Parce qu'on n'ose pas - avec l'arrivé de l'inspecteur, je vais mettre la cravache comme ça [in the drawer]. Quand l'inspecteur arrive, tu mets ça en bas. Mais, tu es obligé, de temps en temps, de l'utiliser. Corriger l'enfant. Si non, c'est pas possible. Parce que quand l'enfant n'a peur de rien, les apprentissages deviennent difficiles!* / I mean that the teacher, he/she is even obligated, well...to...perhaps, how can I say it again? To think a little about home. "Maybe Papa is successful with this, so I'm going to use it as well." But, that's simply in hiding, right? Because we don't dare - with the arrival of an inspector, I put the whip like this [in the drawer]. When the inspector comes, you put that down there. But, you are obligated, from time to time, to use it. Correct the child. If not, it's not possible. Because when children aren't afraid of anything, teaching becomes very difficult! (Director, 1st Interview)

This commentary emphasizes the vulnerable position of teachers in needing to control the students in their classes and how they may resort to physical force out of necessity. The Director also makes a very clear argument that teachers use beatings because children are used to it and it is effective. In essence, the strategy works because it resonates with cultural practices.

Due to the large class sizes at this school, inadequate teacher training, and a lack

of resources, classroom management is particularly challenging in Senegal. This school is no exception. What I have presented within this section is how the majority of teachers and the school director utilize corporal punishment as a disciplinary method with students. Despite its official ban, teachers and the Director threaten and use corporal punishment to redress unacceptable behavior. In discussions with participants, they made it clear that many rely upon physical force to be able to survive within the classroom. As the school Director and Monsieur Sy (Veteran floating teacher) indicated, hitting and beating children may represent borrowings from local parenting and Quoranic school practices. This is an intriguing idea and highly controversial as it suggests the potential inclusion of normative societal practices that contradict more internationally understood human rights as part of integrating local culture and Indigenous knowledges within the classroom. However, resorting to corporal punishment seems to be an obvious solution for educators at this school and, in this case, they do not hesitate to pull what indeed may be a home practice into the school grounds.

Summary

This chapter focuses on the informal ways that culture and Indigenous knowledges permeate the school grounds of the school that served as the study site. As I describe above, Senegalese culture is present in a number of ways, including through the prominent use of Wolof in almost all aspects of school activities. Moreover, familial relationships among school staff, between teachers and students, and simply between students also resonate with Senegalese culture. The latter is clearly demonstrated through the fluid movement of students through siblings' classrooms. In addition, research

participants expressed a sense of solidarity that they find to be present at school. Solidarity manifests through interactions among the school staff as well as attentiveness and care that teachers provide to students. A third issue that I address in this chapter concerns the influence of Islam at the school. While I will discuss formal religious instruction and ways that teachers incorporate Islam readily within their lessons in greater detail in Chapter 7, here I provided examples of how Islam is present through preparations for exams and through decisions to wear headscarves (hijab).

Lastly, I presented how teachers and the school director use corporal punishment to control and motivate student behavior and learning. Multiple examples arose in my research despite a ban on physical punishment that extends from at least 1979. However, as participants indicated, as long as the inspector is not present at school, the majority readily use force as a classroom management strategy. Moreover, research participants identified corporal punishment as having its origin possibly in Quoranic schools as well as in home childraising practices. These conjectures have intriguing as well as unsettling implications for integrating cultural practices and Indigenous knowledges within formal education. They also underline once more the layered cultural influences that animate peoples' lives. Now that I have explored how a shared Senegalese culture permeates the school grounds, implicitly being present within students' and teachers' experiences, I turn my attention to how culture serves as a feature of actual classroom lessons in the next chapter, Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

INTEGRATING CULTURE WITHIN LESSONS

Parce que le maître, c'est un pédagogue. Le pédagogue, c'est celui qui peut exprimer, qui peut expliquer les choses à quelqu'un pour qu'il puisse comprendre. Donc, la façon d'enseigner - un inspecteur qui rentre dans ma classe qui me trouve en train de parler Wolof, il n'a rien à dire. Ce qu'on cherche c'est que l'élève puisse comprendre le message...Et maintenant, cette comprehénsion, vraiment...des fois, ça passe par l'expression Wolof. / Because the teacher, he/she's an educator. An educator is someone who can express him/herself, who can explain things so that someone else may understand. So, the way to teach - an inspector who comes into my class and finds me speaking Wolof, has nothing to say. What we are looking for is that students can understand the message...And now, that understanding, really...sometimes, it comes via Wolof expression.

(Monsieur Diouf, 6th grade, host teacher, 1st Interview)

En générale, ici, on recopiait les Français, mais avec le Curriculum, on commence un peu à intégrer les réalités du milieu. / In general, here, we used to copy the French, but with the *Curriculum*, we are starting a little to integrate local realities.

(Madame Diallo, 3rd grade, Interview)

Quand moi, j'étais élève, j'apprenais l'histoire du Sénégal! D'ailleurs, nous, quand on était élèves, nos maîtres...affichent - eh, dessinaient les figures historiques, les Lat Dior, les Samouru Touré, ils dessinaient ça dans les mûrs. Les anciens maîtres, ils faisaient ça. Donc, on apprenait tout ça. Depuis moi - c'est ce que j'ai connu. Je ne sais pas si nos parents l'ont fait mais nous, c'est ce qu'on a appris. Mais, ça continue jusqu'à présent. On apprend la culture sénégalaise. [C'est] dans l'histoire qu'on rentre dans les détailles de la culture. / When I was a student, I learned about Senegalese history! Moreover, us, when we were students, our teachers...put up - uh, drew the historical figures, like Lat Dior, Samoury Touré, they drew them on the walls. The former teachers did that. So, we learned all of that. Since me - that's what I knew. I don't know if our parents did it like that, but we, that's what we learned. And that continues into the present. We learn about Senegalese culture. It's in history that we go into the culture in detail.

(Madame Ndoye, 2nd grade teacher, Interview)

Although the extent to which classroom lessons reflect students' cultures in practice remains a question, two education laws articulate a dedication to culturally relevant and reinforcing education in Senegal. First, a 1991 law emphasizes African

identity as central to Senegal's national education strategy. Article 6 of Law 91-22 underlines a commitment to teaching in national languages as well as "providing a deep understanding of African history and culture" (Sénégal, 1991, my translation; see appendix for full text). Second, a previous educational decree still stands as the framework for the organization of primary school instruction (*Portant organisation de l'Enseignement élémentaire*). This law explains very clearly that teaching should make reference to students' realities and in doing so, gradually open students up to the world:

> *L'on s'est attaché à révéler à l'enfant le milieu naturel dans lequel il évolue, pour une meilleure prise de conscience et une connaissance plus approfondie de ce milieu. L'on s'est efforcé de ménager un élargissement progressif de ses horizons par cercles concentriques.* / One must engage in revealing children's natural environment to them in order to promote an increased awareness and deeper understanding of this environment. One must make an effort to create a progressive opening of students' horizons through concentric circles. (Sénégal, 1979, p. 2, my translation)

The notion of gradual opening up is something that a number of school personnel referenced, and it seems to harken back to the philosophy of Senegal's first president, Leopold Sedar Senghor. Senghor was an avid Francophile, and he left a legacy of veneration of French culture and language, most notable in language policies that recognize French as the sole official language. One component of the president's underlying educational philosophy was that learning should be rooted in African culture and traditions with the final goal of preparing young Senegalese to be open to other cultures, something that French could more easily facilitate (Diallo, 2010). While I will return to the issue of language policy in more detail below, I present these laws here as context for understanding and comparing what actually takes place within classrooms at this one school, which serves as my research site.

With these legal assertions in mind, in this chapter, I investigate the presence of Senegalese culture within classroom experiences. My findings challenge the literature's argument that education systems in Africa are incongruent with local cultures. While surely, there is room for growth, here I provide evidence of lessons that foreground students' culture and knowledges as well as areas that could be strengthened. I begin this chapter with the overwhelming affirmation of the majority of research participants that in order to be good teachers, they must relate lessons to students' lives. In order to provide context, I describe the curricular reforms that preoccupy this school and others in Senegal at the time of my research. One of my key findings is that the new *Curriculum* espouses a commitment to cultural relevancy. I then move on to systematically demonstrate four ways in which lessons are culturally relevant. I showcase the use of Wolof language, both through code-switching as well as a defacto language of instruction (LOI); culturally based texts; seizing learning moments; and finally, student investigations. The subsequent chapter will focus more specifically on how various subjects reinforce or distance student cultures and explores additional examples of cultural relevancy. While many of my findings reveal that teachers both support and challenge local cultures within their teachings, this is the subject of Chapter 8.

Referencing Culture *Is* Good Teaching[12]

My data show overwhelmingly that teachers feel that, in order to be good teachers, they must reach out to student realities. Of the eleven teachers and one school

[12] Reference to Ladson-Billings (1995), But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice 34*(3), 159-165.

director that I spoke with, only one teacher said categorically that culture was not evident in school. However, his practices showed that, to the contrary, he very much brings in students' experiences in order to create access points to lessons. Incidentally, this one outlier is Monsieur Diouf (6th grade), the teacher who acted as my point of contact and home base during my research period. While I will investigate his contentions more closely below, in this section, I will explore how the majority of participants understand bridging to students' cultures as integral to their teaching approach and pedagogical strategies. In sum, making such connections is part of being a good teacher.

To begin, I present excerpts from key conversations I had with both the school director and Monsieur Ba, a fifth grade teacher. Both of these references resound of the Senghorian philosophy of rooting education in African culture in order to be open to other cultures. In this first passage from my interview with the Director, he speaks about how connecting to students' cultures creates a bridge for students to be able to understand more afar references and concepts. He speaks in detail about how this is gradually done as students move up the various grade levels:

> *Parce que d'abord, l'enfant doit connaître d'abord son milieu, l'histoire de son milieu. Il s'enracine d'abord. Il s'implante. Il doit se connaître d'abord pour s'ouvrir. Voilà. Il doit connaître d'abord son milieu pour pouvoir maintenant, s'ouvrir. Ca c'est à partir de 9 ans. C'est ce qu'on appelle le CE1...Voilà...Voilà...Après, maintenant le CE1.... CE1jusqu'au CE- c'est ce qu'on appelle les CEs - cours élémentaire, quoi. Les CEs quoi. Au CE1 maintenant, ils s'ouvrent un peu. C'est à dire, tout ça c'est le Sénégal. Maintenant, arrivé maintenant au CM1, on essaye maintenant de sortir un peu du Sénégal. De parler des grands royaumes d'Afrique. Les grands grands royaumes: le Ghana, le Mali...le royaume Songhaï...Voilà...[inaudible]...The enfant maintenant commence à s'ouvrir...Et l'enfant maintenant aussi, au CM, il commence maintenant aussi, a connaître le passé, le traite au 19ième siècle - la traite négrière.* / Because first of all, children should first be aware of their environment, the history of their environment. They root themselves first. They implant themselves. They should first know themselves in order to open up. So, there you go. They first need to know about their environment in order to be able to open up.

> That's beginning at 9 years old. It's what's called CE1 (3rd grade)...So, there you go...There you go...After, now CE1...CE1 through CE - it's what's called CE - elementary course, you know. The CEs, you know. In CE1 (3rd grade), now, they open up a bit. I mean, all of that is about Senegal. Now, once in CM1 (5th grade), we now try to leave Senegal a bit. Try to speak about the great kingdoms of Africa. The great kingdoms: Ghana, Mali...the Songhai empire...There you go...[inaudible]...Children now start to open up...And children, now, once in the CM cycle, they start now too, to know their past, 19th Century trade - the slave trade. (Director, 1st interview)

Clearly, the Director speaks about education in concentric circles - beginning with a student's close environment and then exploring more abstract concepts, such as the former African kingdoms and the slave trade. Still, all of these examples are closely connected to African realities.

For further emphasis, I also present the words of Monsieur Ba, a fifth grade teacher. In this passage he outlines clearly that beginning with a student's culture allows teachers to be more successful in their profession. He also expresses a number of steps of a process, beginning with students' lived experiences:

> *Donc, en somme, il faut comprendre que donc, pour mieux réussir son apprentissage, donc, dans l'école sénégalaise, il faut partir de la culture, du vécu de l'enfant pour lui sortir et l'extraire et maintenant lui faire voyager pour, pour, pour attendre d'autres cultures.* / So, to sum up, you must understand then, in order to succeed in one's teaching, so, in the Senegalese school, you need to start with culture, from a student's lived experiences so as to take him out and extract him and now make him travel so that, so that, so that he can access other cultures. (Monsieur Ba, 5th grade teacher, Interview)

These two passages - from the school Director and from Monsieur Ba - distinctly illustrate educators' belief in a teaching approach that begins with what students knows and then expands more widely. While these were the clearest articulations of this process, they align with a number of other teachers' comments about the importance of connecting to student realities.

Some teachers even more clearly expressed that being a good teacher means

adapting the proposed content to students' realities. Both Monsieur Ba and Madame Sy (Veteran floating teacher) in separate interviews provided examples of lessons on systems of communication and transportation respectively. In both cases, they expressed how the teacher must adjust the lesson to reflect the resources and services present in students' communities. For example, Monsieur Ba expressed that in Dakar, it may make sense to discuss computers, but in other communities, even references to cellphones may be irrelevant. He continued and connected to the example also mentioned by Madame Sy, that of transportation. Monsieur Ba explained how, depending on the community, rather than beginning with a lesson on trains, it may make more sense to begin with a lesson about horse-drawn carriages, bikes, and cars, and then, eventually the train (5th grade teacher, Interview). Similarly, Madame Sy explained that in one community, when a teacher asks students about modes of transportation, they may speak about bikes, motorcycles, boats from experience and later about trains from having read about them. On the other hand, in another locality, students may begin with the train because it passes just behind their school (Madame Sy, Veteran floating teacher, 2nd Interview). Although teachers make it clear that they can discuss topics that students may not know from their own lives and experience, many teachers articulated that they begin with what students know because that is good pedagogy.

Another teacher undoubtedly expressed that teachers must connect to the local environment in their lessons. Not doing so would be very poor practice. As Monsieur Ndiaye (1st grade) explained:

> *à [town name], il y a des réalités là-bas. Il faut les respecter. Il faut les respecter. Il serait très mal placé de parler d'un autre village. Mais, là où on est, ce qui se passe, par exemple, on donne une leçon, il faut tenir compte de la vécu de l'enfant.* / In [town name], there are certain realities there. You must respect them. You

> must respect them. It would be very poor to speak about another village. But, wherever you are, what takes place, for example, you give a lesson and you have to take into account children's lived experiences. (Monsieur Ndiaye, Interview)

This commentary, like so many others, seems to state the obvious: a good teacher connects with students' lives. In addition, Monsieur Ndiaye mentions that knowing about students' home lives allows him to serve them better (Interview). He names many of the difficulties that students face including poverty, hunger, and needing to work to help parents. Being aware of students' experiences helps him to teach them more easily.

Moreover, even Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher), who was adamant that there is no place for culture in what he does in the classroom, regularly made reference to students' lived experience throughout his lessons (Fieldnotes). As illustration, when I asked Monsieur Diouf to identify a recent lesson that he felt was very successful in reaching students, he mentioned a lesson on fractions that I had observed a few days earlier (1st Interview). The heart of this lesson was an example about a loaf of bread and how to split it amongst various people. In this lesson, he referred to how mothers separate bread amongst their children, making reference to students' lives, culture, and to an extent, Indigenous knowledge. Firstly, this example relates to women's role within Senegalese society as the primary caregivers of their children. Secondly, preparing a meal and sharing it amongst family and guests is extremely important, and Monsieur Diouf used the Wolof term "*seddo*" in his lesson in order to strengthen the connection for students. Many Senegalese women pride themselves on being able to serve the meal in a way that accommodates each person present and, moreover, that there may be extra for unexpected visitors. When, after the lesson, I mentioned to Monsieur Diouf that I was impressed with how students followed along, he replied that it was because the lesson was about bread

and that Lebous like bread (Fieldnotes).

This comment demonstrates that, as a teacher, Monsieur Diouf designs lessons to connect to students' interests and also reveals a common stereotype, that Lebous like bread. The latter may indicate a joking cousins' relationship (*cousinage/kaal)* between Monsieur Diouf and the Lebou group. This relationship exists between the Sereer and the Lebou, for instance, and often manifests itself in jokes about which group is more gluttonous than the other. This lesson is just one example of how Monsieur Diouf connects to local sensibilities in his teaching, and I believe it is fundamental to this particular lesson's success. Moreover, students were engaged by a local reference, and they were motivated to follow his teaching. This example, like the ones before it, demonstrates unequivocally that teachers participating in this study view connecting to students' realities, their cultural background in particular, as part of good teaching.

New *Curriculum*: Overview

The timing of my on-site research period coincided with the last phase of the Ministry of Education's roll-out of the new pre-school and primary level curriculum, the *Curriculum d'éducation de base (CEB)*, translated as Basic Education Curriculum, and referred to generally as *Le Curriculum*. Curricular reforms at the primary school level are part of a much larger reform effort, the *Programme Decennal de l'Education et de la Formation (PDEF)* (Education Training and Development Program). It represents the Ministry's initiative to address Millennium Development Goals through an overall expansion of the education sector (DeStefano, Lyndt & Thornton, 2009). While this present study does not provide a comprehensive history of this curricular change, nor a

detailed analysis of its implementation, here I provide an overview of the *Curriculum* including wherever possible teachers' perspectives on the new approach. As evident below, this research reveals a number of teacher understandings of the *Curriculum* as an approach that is more culturally relevant and validating of students' knowledges.

This new *Curriculum* is the third such reform of the Senegalese primary educational system since independence. The first reorganization was an emphasis on content (*entrée par le contenu*), pushed during reforms in 1962, 1972 and 1979. According to an education inspector interviewed in Sagna's (2007) article, this approach was "encyclopedic" in the amount of material it expected students to master. The second reform, known as *Pégagogie par objectif* (PPO) was an objectives-based curriculum. However, neither approach allowed students to be effective problem-solvers (Sagna, 2007). Therefore, helping students to solve problems is the focus of this new skills-based curriculum. It is also referred to as a competency-based curriculum.

The movement towards the *Curriculum* began as far back as 1996 (Sagna, 2007) and has undergone a number of iterations. The initiative was led by the Ministry of Education in partnership with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which served as the principle donor for the project and provided technical support. While the *Album de lecture (*compilation of texts) and *Guide pédagogique* (Teacher's guide) are the most obvious manifestations of the new *Curriculum,* these are clearly two pieces within a much larger project. The initiative includes objectives, content, methodology, assessment and evaluation strategies, the development of support materials, and training efforts (Sagna, 2007; DeStefano et al., 2009). Implementation of the new *Curriculum* began officially in 2005 with a pilot stage that identified approximately 70 classes

serving as test sites. In 2007, the *Curriculum* was generalized to the preschool level. Implementation at the elementary school level began gradually in 2009, although initially scheduled for 2008 (APS, 2009). It began with the 1st (CI) and 3rd (CEI) grades in the 2009-2010 academic year. July 2013 marked the end of the roll-out phase as students who were part of the initial 3rd grade Curricular class would then be in 6th grade (CM2). In order to develop resource materials, the project mobilized 40 Senegalese writers and curriculum-building experts. As of 2011, it had trained approximately 260 inspectors and 8,000 teachers into the competency-based approach (CIDA, 2011). Clearly, training efforts continued beyond 2011 as teachers interviewed for this present study expressed attending trainings in 2012 as well.

Of course, one of the main questions as to the significance of such a curricular reform revolves around its impact on the evaluation system. Will the new *Curriculum* lead to changes in the end-of-primary cycle exam, the *Entrée in Sixième*? At the time of my research, both Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher) and the school director expressed doubts that the end-of-cycle exam would change much during this first year of implementation at the 6th grade level. Based on my discussions with Monsieur Diouf, who was widely respected at the school for his success in preparing students for the end-of-cycle exam, he explained that the new *Curriculum* did not change his preparation of students. In other words, he was not preparing his students to take an exam tailored for a competency-based approach. He even indicated in our discussions that he was likely to continue with his pre-reform routine that first year, adapting *Curriculum* practices more earnestly the following year (2013-2014). Nonetheless, my classroom observations revealed that Monsieur Diouf was implementing some pieces of the new *Curriculum*,

including the texts and group work. However, he expressed a resistance to student investigations (see below), stating that exam classes had no time for such accessory activities. Nonetheless, it seems that Monsieur Diouf's assumptions may have been incorrect as *Seneplus* news indicated that the 2013 *Entrée en Sixième* was indeed competency-based (Ndiaye, 2013). In his article, Ndiaye (2013) identifies students who sat for the 2013 exam as "sacrificial lambs" (1st paragraph, translation mine), perhaps indicating that confusion may have been more widespread than the one school that I studied. While it is beyond the scope of this present study to assess the effectiveness of the *Curriculum* and its impact on the end-of-primary cycle examination process, this remains an intriguing area for further research.

One of the central features of the *Curriculum*'s competency-based approach is its emphasis on reading and reproducing texts, also known as *Entrée par les textes* or text-based approach. Teachers pull texts from a proposed selection compiled in the *Album de textes* or the *Guide pédagogique*. These texts centralize all other French language lessons, including grammar, vocabulary, orthography, and composition. The final step in a text-based lesson is guiding students in the reproduction of a similar text that follows the format of the text presented, for example, a narrative text, letter, etc. In comparing and contrasting the former approach with the *Curricular* approach, Madame Diallo (3rd grade teacher) commented that:

> *Par exemple, avant on prenait un texte de lecture à part. On prenais un texte de vocabulaire à part, leçon de grammaire à part. Maintenant, on te donne un texte, un texte bien riche. Tu en prends...tu as à faire un projet d'écriture. Tu fais lecture. Tu expliques le texte... Eh... vocabulaire. Tu étudies ça. Tu étudies les mots qui sont là-dedans. En grammaire, en orthoographe. En suite, à la fin de la semaine, l'élève essayera de faire le même genre de texte.* / For example, before you would do a reading text separately. You would do a vocabulary text separately, a grammar lesson separately. Now, they give you a text, a very rich text. You take

> it...you have to do a writing project. You do the reading. You explain the text...Uh...vocabulary. You study that. You study the words that are in it. In grammar and spelling. Then, at the end of the week, students will try to write the same sort of text. (Madame Diallo, 3rd grade teacher, Interview)

Madame Diallo had been teaching with the new *Curriculum* since it was first introduced within the primary schools. Her commentary underlines the centrality of texts within current teaching methods. While I did not notice many students producing original texts during my classroom observations, teachers did indicate that students are able to write their own compositions. For instance, Madame Diallo shared that her third graders are able to produce texts that average about five sentences. Similarly, in Monsieur Diouf's sixth grade class, I observed students writing letters to friends inviting them to a birthday party. While the format was very similar to the letter presented in class, many of the ideas were quite original. Nonetheless, in a class of 60 students, it is doubtful that even the majority is able to arrive at such a product, leading to questions of educational quality that are beyond the scope of this present dissertation.

In addition to being competency and text-based, the new *Curriculum* marks a significant move towards an approach that is more learner-centered and, moreover, one that has as its foundation in students' lived experiences and knowledges. In general, the participants in this study found that the new *Curriculum* does allow for a more learner-centered model, in which students generate knowledge alongside the teacher. Group work, for instance, is a method that this new model privileges. Indeed, I observed that at least four of the school's twelve classrooms use grouped seating arrangements, although the extent to which teachers actually integrate group work within lessons is somewhat doubtful. One teacher, Madame Diouf (4th grade), indicated that she inherited the seating arrangement for her fourth grade class from another teacher but that she finds it

bothersome as it leads her students to socialize. On the contrary, Madame Ndoye lamented that she had too many students in her second grade classroom this year to allow for groupings, although she had found it beneficial last year. Moreover, in discussions with students, they indicated mixed feelings about group work. One female student said that it is difficult to work with male students. A male student criticized that group work allows for free loaders to take advantage of stronger students. At the same time, all focus group students agreed that they liked being able to listen to other students' ideas. Group work presents one example of a more learner-centered approach that the *Curriculum* fosters. I will comment on the learner-centered aspects of other techniques in the sections that follow.

Moreover, an espoused goal of this new approach is connecting with students' realities. One journalist summarizes the following about the new *Curriculum*:

> It's children who guide their own knowledge. They take charge of it. The teachers only provide direction. The Curriculum articulates itself around the daily lived realities of children. This is about active instruction, not abstract instruction (Ndiaye, 2013, 7th paragraph, Translation mine).

One of the concepts used to lead this new process is that of "integrating" acquired skills in order to achieve problem solving. In an interview with the school Director, he reiterated how the new *Curriculum* emphasizes the production of original texts through the integration of lessons and skills learned, similar to Madame Diallo's commentary above. However, he went even further to address the knowledge production process that Ndiaye (2013) also alludes to above. He explained that the *Curriculum* aims to enable students to use their *savoir faire* (knowledge) and their *savoir-être* (interpersonal skills) to solve problems in their everyday lives. As Madame Diallo (3rd grade explained), teachers emphasize with students that "*ce que tu apprends, tu l'intègres dans ta façon de*

faire, dans ta vie quotidienne / what you learn, you integrate it into your way of doing things, into your daily life" (Interview). Participants reiterated this goal repeatedly in conversations about the new *Curriculum*. Indeed, if the *Curriculum* is able to help students recognize and synthesize the various cultures and knowledges at their disposition (home knowledge, Indigenous knowledges, school knowledge, scientific knowledge, etc.) this reform will make a significant attempt in validating knowledges that have hitherto been ignored by many school systems. Lastly, despite this initiative being development-driven, cultural relevancy nonetheless seems to be at the heart of the new *Curriculum* project. Its foregrounding of students' cultures and experiences runs counter to assertions within the literature that development-driven education will reduce the space for cultural relevancy and the incorporation of Indigenous knowledges (Brock-Utne, 2000; see Chapter 2). To the contrary, in this case, the development-driven aim seems to promote competency by teaching students to integrate all of their knowledges in order to find a solution to problems they encounter.

So far within this chapter, I have argued that teachers view cultural relevancy as a part of their professionalism and their ability to convey lessons and messages to students. I also have provided information about the new *Curriculum* reform in order to situate the arguments that follow. Yet the context would not be complete without mention of language policies and a description of how teachers actually employ languages while in the classroom. To this end, I devote the next section to an examination of the usage of Wolof within instruction.

Wolof Usage within Instruction

As in the previous chapter, Chapter 5, in which I demonstrate how Wolof is used in multiple ways on the school grounds, here I present an overview of language policies, teachers' perceptions of the policies, as well as an examination of how Wolof is actually used within classrooms. This information provides important grounding for understanding the techniques that follow in the next section.

Language Policies

In actuality, a number of policies in Senegal urge instruction to occur within national languages like Wolof. In addition to the 1991 article mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the earlier 1979 policy on the *Organisation de l'Enseignement élémentaire* (Structure of Elementary Education) makes several references to employing national languages, particularly within the first few grades. Moreover, a 1984 reform known as the *Ecole Nouvelle* (New School) makes the recommendation that the dominant language of the schooling area should be the LOI beginning with preschool through at least age 9 (Diallo, 2010). This time would allow the focus of education to be on developing speaking, writing, and reading skills within children's home languages rather than the acquisition of French. Similarly, DeStefano et al. (2009) note that policies require that the first three years of instruction be in national languages, but this does not translate over to practice.

Although other formerly French colonies, such as Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, are developing strong mother-tongue based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) practices (Ouane & Glanz, 2011), Senegal lags behind in this respect (Skattum, 2009). Lackluster experiences of Community Schools in Senegal, for example (see Obanya, 1995; Diarra,

Fall, Gueye, Mara & Marchand, 2000; Miller-Grandvaux & Yoder, 2002), seem to indicate an unsupportive and hostile environment for multilingual education. Nonetheless, there have been some - albeit weak - efforts to foster education in national languages within the formal system (Obanya, 1995; Cruise O'Brien, 2003; Diallo, 2010). These include pilot projects, such as a 2002 trial phase where 170 national language classes were scattered across five regions in Senegal (Diallo, 2010). Currently, another project has developed in support of bilingual education, in which 100 classes in the areas of Dakar, Kaolack, and Saint Louis serve as test-sites. Although the approach is bilingual and French continues to co-exist as an LOI, materials have been translated, including elements from the new *Curriculum*, and teachers have received significant training. This current project is being implemented by Associates in Research in Education & Development (ARED), an NGO, in cooperation with support from the Hewlett Foundation (Ousmane Kane, Skype Interview; Personal conversation with ARED Director, January 2012). The existence of this project and its success in translating *Curriculum* documents contests DeStefano et al.'s (2009) argument that the new *Curriculum* may serve as an obstacle to MTB-MLE. While this project may be promising and should be lauded for its continued interest in MTB-MLE approaches within Senegal, given previous efforts, its impact on the larger formal schooling system remains to be seen.

While an in-depth study of the factors that obstruct implementation of policies supporting national languages as LOI are beyond the scope of this present paper, scholars frequently cite several reasons including:

- inefficiency in implementation coupled with a lack of political will to implement (Alidou, 2004; Diallo, 2010);
- economic concerns for developing necessary pedagogical resources in national languages (Alidou, 2004); and
- weak community support, often impacted by misinformed perceptions from parents, educators, and students (Paulson, 2010).

While none of the teachers in this present study went so far as to advocate for the usage of Wolof as the official LOI, all teachers expressed Wolof as a powerful tool in their pedagogical toolbox. I next explore teachers' perceptions of language policies and how they employ Wolof within their teaching.

Teachers' DeFacto Use of Wolof

Based on my observations that confirmed the presence of Wolof within the classroom, interview questions regularly explored teachers' use of Wolof. These questions were also prompted by my previous understanding that only French was permitted within classrooms. This understanding derived from many conversations with Senegalese individuals who underwent formal schooling in the 1980s and 1990s. Many of these individuals, including my husband, will attest to the experience of having to wear a bone or another sort of embarrassing object around one's neck if one spoke Wolof (or another national language) within the classroom (Personal Communication). This punishment was known as "*le symbole* / the symbol" and was a colonial artifact (also see Moumouni, 1998; Kwang Johnson, 2004). It was apparently officially abolished in the early 1980s (Moumouni, 1998) but clearly continued beyond that time.

In contrast, my observations at this current school showed consistent use of Wolof in all areas of the school, including within the classroom. Responding to my inquiries, all research participants repeatedly indicated that they knew of no official policy banning the use of Wolof in the classroom. Moreover, many teachers often continued to argue that much the opposite, the use of Wolof improves instruction. As Madame Ndoye (2nd grade) expressed, she feels obligated to introduce words in the national language into her teaching so that children may understand and follow the lesson (Interview). In addition to helping students to understand lesson content, my observations also demonstrated that teachers use Wolof within the classroom to create a comfortable learning environment by joking with students and providing advice (discussed further within this chapter), to provide explanations for classroom procedures, and in order to discipline students.
At the same time, all teachers agree that the use of national languages should taper off after grade three, with instruction in upper grades being solely in French. This was also supported by my conversation with Monsieur Kane, the former education inspector (Skype Interview). As I will discuss below, in reality, Wolof is used in all grades, including sixth grade classes that I observed.

The practice of altering speech between students' home language and the LOI is known as "code-switching" (Alidou & Brock-Utne, 2011) and is typical of teaching when students learn through languages other than dominant languages (Ouane & Glanz, 2011)[13]. While some authors point to code-switching as an act of desperation (Brock-Utne & Alidou, 2011), in this study, teachers clearly understood utilizing Wolof as a way

[13] While I use the term "code-switching" here, Swigart's (1994) analysis of urban Wolof identifies a new variety of language distinct from code-switching. Further linguistic research of language patterns in classrooms may be able to provide greater information. For lack of a better term, at present, I continue to use the term code-switching.

to better reach their students, and thus, they did so readily. In addition, students sometimes replied to teachers in Wolof. On occasion, I noticed that a teacher would encourage a student to rephrase the commentary in French, but not always (Fieldnotes). While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to perform a close linguistic analysis of the class sequences that I observed, my notes are full of Wolof utterances, including two lessons entirely delivered in Wolof. I will return to the latter below. Note also that in all cases, the use of Wolof was oral with written summaries being in French. In addition, none of the participants indicated having teaching materials in national languages.

In speaking with teachers, I asked them about their Wolof use. I present here two teachers' responses that underscore the use of Wolof as good pedagogy. The first is from Monsieur Ba (5th grade), in which he expresses the need for Wolof in order to help students to better understand lessons:

> *Parce que vous savez que le Français, la langue qu'on utilise à l'école, c'est pas la langue maternelle. C'est pas notre langue maternelle. Donc, la langue maternelle c'est le Wolof, donc, on a le Pulaar, etc. Donc, maintenant, parfois il arrive que l'élève a le problème de compréhension, surtout avec le vocabulaire. Là, tu es obligé - si vous...même si vous suivez, parfois j'emploi le Wolof. C'est pour qu'on parvient - parfois, capter l'image et les faire rire et les faire revenir pour qu'ils comprennent mieux. Donc, ça va donc, dans le cadre, donc de mon apprentissage.* / Because you know that French, the language we use at school, isn't our mother-tongue. It's not our mother-tongue. So, our mother-tongue is Wolof, or, there's Pulaar, etc. So, now, sometimes, it happens that a student has a problem understanding, especially with vocabulary. There, you are obligated - if you...even if you pay attention, sometimes I use Wolof. It's so that we get to - sometimes, to get a picture and make them laugh and then come back so that they better understand. So, that goes then, within the framework of my, of my teaching. (Monsieur Ba, 5th grade teacher, Interview)

In this rich passage, Monsieur Ba explains that he uses Wolof to help students to understand, but also to help achieve an environment in which they are more comfortable and more able to grasp information presented. He also clearly identifies using Wolof as a

teaching technique. Similarly, I repeat here an excerpt from my interview with Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher) that I included at the start of this chapter. At this point in the interview, he had already spoken about how he often "*glisse* / slips in" Wolof within his lessons. I then probed to see if this was something that he felt would be sanctioned by an educational inspector. He responded:

> *Parce que le maître, c'est un pédagogue. Le pédagogue, c'est celui qui peut exprimer, qui peut expliquer les choses à quelqu'un pour qu'il puisse comprendre. Donc, la façon d'enseigner - un inspecteur qui rentre dans ma classe qui me trouve en train de parler Wolof, il n'a rien à dire. Ce qu'on cherche c'est que l'élève puisse comprendre le message...Et maintenant, cette comprehénsion, vraiment...des fois, ça passe par l'expression Wolof.* / Because the teacher, he/she's an educator. An educator is someone who can express him/herself, who can explain things so that someone else may understand. So, the way to teach - an inspector who comes into my class and finds me speaking Wolof, has nothing to say. What we are looking for is that students can understand the message...And now, that understanding, really...sometimes, it comes through Wolof expression. (Monsieur Diouf, 6th grade, host teacher, 1st Interview)

Clearly, Monsieur Diouf also views the use of Wolof as a required tool for good teaching. Like Monsieur Ba (5th grade), he understands using Wolof as a didactic technique that can improve learning. This resonates with a comment from Monsieur Kane, the former inspector, with whom I discussed language issues. He noted that teachers now use national languages in a more systematic way and that they receive training to help them to do so (Skype Interview). His comment also supports Heugh's (2011) assertion that code-switching can be beneficial if supported by teacher training.

As I noted above, on two occasions with different teachers, I observed lessons delivered almost entirely in Wolof. This complicates the literature that describes the use of national languages largely as code-switching (see Brock-Utne & Alidou, 2011). It also contradicts a recent EGRA study performed by RTI in 2010 within 3rd grade classrooms in Senegal. The RTI study found that 80% of teachers used Wolof for three-minutes or

less during a class period, thus concluding "national languages are seldom used" (2010, p. 13). However, I observed Wolof being used to introduce and expand upon lesson content within two classes, in particular, Madame Diouf's fourth-grade class and Madame Diallo's third grade class. In the first incident, Madame Diouf was reviewing the text *Le Choc des Titans,* about a local wrestling match (see the next section for the complete text). Much of the discussion about the text and the ensuing vocabulary lesson was in Wolof. The second lesson that I observed was in a third-grade classroom, incidentally the same level studied by the RTI report. The lesson lasted for over 10 minutes, well beyond the 3 minutes noted by RTI. As the teacher, Madame Diallo, began her *Vivre ensemble* / Living together lesson about being polite, she paused to inform me that she would be using a lot of Wolof. Indeed, Wolof made up the majority of her lecture, with the exception of the final minute of the lesson and the written summary at the end, which occurred in French.

My interview with Madame Diallo took place after that lesson and I was able to revisit her lesson during our discussion. In response to my question about her use of Wolof in her teaching, she replied:

> *Ici, c'est un milieu Wolof. Tu le monde comprend le Wolof. Et les enfants n'ont pas - eh...il n'ont pas eu formation maternelle - n'ont pas fait l'école maternelle. Dans leurs maisons, ils n'ont pas um...les parents n'ont pas fait l'école. Dans les maisons, on parle le Wolof souvent. C'est pour quoi j'utilisais - j'utilise le Wolof - pour eh...pour les aider un peu. Pour la compréhension....C'est pour que les élèves comprennent. On n'enseigne pas pour que les élèves parcourisent sans comprendre. Il faut - c'est la compréhension qui est l'essentiel.* / Here, it's a Wolof area. Everyone understands Wolof. And the children don't have...they don't have a pre-school education - haven't gone to pre-school. In their homes, they don't have uh...parents haven't gone to school. In their homes, they often speak Wolof. That's why I used - I use Wolof - so that...to help them a little bit. For their understanding...It's so that the students understand. We don't teach so that students memorize without understanding. We need to - it's comprehension that is most important. (Madame Diallo, 3rd grade, Interview)

The imperative for understanding rather than memorization is reminiscent of the new *Curriculum.* Indeed, if teachers understand that the new reform emphasizes comprehension, which in turn requires an increased use of Wolof, it seems that the *Curriculum* may be opening up the possibility for more national language use. While the current study can make no quantitative claims about the prominence of Wolof as LOI, findings certainly call for future research in this area. Furthermore, Madame Diallo also explained that she uses Wolof because she feels it is her duty to educate students - "*sont nos enfants* / they are our children" - and this is the best way to reach them (Interview). I will return to this issue of teachers feeling an obligation to inculcate students with morals and good behavior in Chapter 8.

Nonetheless, while all teachers spoke to the necessity of using Wolof within their classrooms, this study also finds resistance to a more widespread usage of Wolof. For example, one parent (Khady Diallo's mother), and two teachers (Monsieur Sy and Madame Sy, both Veteran floating teachers) spoke about the need to maintain French as the LOI. They also spoke about the importance of maintaining their own national language, Pulaar, a sentiment also echoed by the school Director in reference to his language, Sereer (Interview #2). To illustrate, Madame Sy, spoke directly about how Wolof may be used in the classroom but sparingly:

> *Tu ne dois pas abuser. Parce que c'est une école Française. Tu dispenses le Français. Donc, tu veux dire que les enfants parlent Français, donc, il faut leur parler Français... C'est à dire, on peut l'utiliser. On le fait - mais d'une façon très, très, très modérée. Il faut pas que les maitresses en abusent comme la génération maintenant, comme elles font. Tu peux entrer dans une classe, tu n'entends que le Wolof - alors, c'est pas bon. Donc, on dois - la langue est permit à l'école, mais sans qu'on l'abuse. /* You shouldn't abuse it. Because this is a French school. You give out French language instruction. So, you want to be able to say that the children speak French, so you have to speak French to them....I mean, you can use

> it. We do it - but in a manner that is very, very, very controlled. It shouldn't be how these [female] teachers abuse it like how this current generation does it. You can enter a class and you only hear Wolof - now, that's not good. So, you must - the language is allowed at school, but not that you abuse it. (Madame Sy, Veteran floating teacher, Interview)

Note that she precisely mentions this current generation of teachers - female - who she feels exaggerate the use of Wolof within the classroom. It bears question whether or not she was referring directly to the teachers I observed using Wolof quite heavily. Similarly, in my discussion with Ousmane Kane[14], the retired education inspector who continues to work on language issues, he commented that "*moi, je vois ça très mal* / me, I see that very poorly" in regards to reliance on national languages for instruction within French classes. While he admits that it is common practice, he interprets such teaching as a lack of teachers' effort to create a French-speaking environment. He is optimistic that the recent reform of teacher standards to require the Baccalaureate degree will increase teachers' usage of French as LOI (Skype Interview).

However, the above critical comments coupled with the aforementioned teachers' perception of Wolof as a teaching tool, as well as my observation of a change from the linguistic experiences of students in the 1980s to the present, nonetheless suggest an opening for greater use of national languages within schooling. While this school is but one example, further research into teacher practices and perceptions is merited. Given the undeniable relationship between culture and language, this may also suggest an increase in cultural relevancy when Wolof is used within instruction. I now turn my focus to other examples of teaching techniques that support the presence of Senegalese culture.

[14] A pseudonym.

Culturally Relevant Teaching Techniques

Now that I have framed my research within the context of the new *Curriculum* and classrooms that employ Wolof through code-switching and occasionally as a non-official LOI, I will demonstrate in the pages that follow additional ways in which the teaching at this particular school is culturally relevant. These findings reveal promising practices, particularly in light of the research that portrays African formal education as disconnected and alienating. Below I focus on the following aspects of teaching within the new *Curriculum* approach: texts, learning moments, and student investigations.

Texts

One of the most obvious ways that culture finds reference within lessons is through texts. As I explained earlier, texts play a critical role within the new *Curriculum*, as they provide the platform for French language lessons, such as vocabulary, conjugation, spelling, and writing exercises. In discussions with research participants, teachers were quick to identify the relationship between texts and students' experiences. For instance, Monsieur Sy responded, "*sont des textes qui parlent quand même du milieu de l'enfant* / they are texts that speak, at least, about children's environments" (Veteran floating teacher, Interview). Classroom observations and a review of various grades' *Album de lecture* / Reading Compilation triangulated this observation, as indeed many texts make cultural references. While a detailed analysis of classroom texts is beyond the scope of this present study, below I present examples that illustrate references to common Senegalese culture. These examples pull from texts that I encountered within lessons -

either texts that teachers exploited during the class that I attended, or references made to previous texts.

Within the younger grades, texts are very simple and are largely explored orally. Beginning in third grade, students are expected to copy down texts. Within the first grade class, I attended a lesson that presented a text of a boy speaking:

> *papa, voilà un ami. comment-t'appelles-tu ? je m'appelle sidi ba.* / papa, there is a friend. what is your name? my name is sidi ba. [letters are all lowercase; Fieldnotes]

Clearly, this is a very simple text (captured below in Figure 6.1), but still, I can argue that it is culturally relevant in its use of the word "Papa," used in both French and Wolof to indicate "Father" as well as the name "Sidi Ba," which is typically Senegalese. Note that Ba is often a last name associated with Pulaar individuals, many of whom make up the town and school's population. This provides at least surface-level evidence that the new *Curriculum* takes into account multiple student cultures. The lesson provides students with an example of how to introduce oneself in French, an important skill for students, many of whom encounter French for the first time formally in first grade.

Figure 6.1: Picture: Two students reading 1st grade text

In addition to this simple introductory level text, two texts in particular stand out as being culturally relevant, largely due to their content but also the way that teachers exploited them within the lesson. The first of these texts is called "*Le Project d'Amina* / Amina's Project." I observed this text being taught in both third-grade classrooms that I visited. This text also serves as an example text in all of the levels of the teacher's guides that accompany the new *Curriculum*. This text addresses a number of cultural values, such as wanting land, receiving help from a relative, perseverance, the importance of marriage and having children, and lastly, owning a home. I have included the full text below:

> <u>*Le Projet d'Amina*</u>
> *Amina est une veuve très courageuse. Elle veut avoir une maison, mais elle n'a pas assez d'argent. Alors, elle décide de faire du commerce. Chaque jour, elle achète des pagnes et les revend. Le soir, elle rentre fatiguée, mais elle gagne un peu plus d'argent. Après quatre mois, Amina calcules ses bénéfices. Ils sont assez importants. Elle sais qu'elle va réussir son projet. Deux ans plus tard, la jeune femme achète une parcelle. Son cousin, Amady, le maçon, lui construit une belle maison. Maintenant, Amina est heureuse avec ses enfants. /*
>
> <u>Amina's Project</u>
> Amina is a very courageous widow. She wants to have a house, but she doesn't have enough money. So, she decides that she is going into retail. Each day, she buys pieces of fabric and resells them. In the evening, she goes home tired, but she earns a little more money. After four months, Amina calculates her profits. They are significant enough. She knows that she is going to succeed with her project. Two years later, the young woman buys a plot of land. Her cousin, Amady, the mason, constructs a beautiful house for her. Now, Amina is happy with her children. (Fieldnotes)

In teaching the text to her students, Madame Sarr emphasized a number of cultural values inherent within the text. I will return to these instances in further sections below.

The second text I wish to highlight is entitled *Le choc des Titans* / The Clash of the Titans and was presented in Madame Diouf's 4th grade class. I referenced this lesson above as one of two that I observed using Wolof prominently as a medium of instruction.

The text mimics an announcement for an upcoming wrestling match. Senegal boasts of its own form of wrestling distinct from Western forms, known in Wolof as *buri* or the match itself, *lamba*. Indeed, it seems probable that the roots of Senegalese wrestling originated among Lebous. In doing interviews with students and their parents, wrestling came up frequently as an example of Lebou culture that continues to enjoy prominence. The full text follows as written on the board:

> *Le choc des Titans:*
> *Texte: Hercule contre Bombardier : le choc des titans ! Une seule date à retenir : vendredi 23 mars 2013 à 18 heures précises au stade Iba Mar Diouf. /*
>
> The Clash of the Titans
> Text: Hurcules against The Bomber: the clash of the titans! Only one date to remember: Friday, March 23, 2013 at 6 pm sharp at the Iba Mar Diouf stadium.

In presenting this text to her students, Madame Diouf made many references to popular wrestlers. She also made jokes about herself taking on some of the major wrestlers. Her presentation utilized a lot of Wolof. As students participated, there was much discussion and joking, perhaps suggesting that students may be more engaged when instruction occurs in Wolof.

Additional texts that I observed spoke about the following topics: an elegant older grandmother (Monsieur Ba's 5th grade class, Fieldnotes), a hunt at the beach, and a letter to a French correspondent (Monsieur Diouf's 6th grade class, Fieldnotes). I have included the full version of these texts in the appendix. Still, in a conversation with Madame Sarr (3rd grade teacher), she explained that she had recently done a lesson called "*Repas de Tabaski* / The Tabaski Meal." In exploring the text with students, she spoke about the importance of sitting on the floor to eat and emphasized how eating at a table would be a rare occurrence within this community (Fieldnotes). All of these texts speak of activities

within an environment that could be Senegal and, possibly, this very town. They indicate a reverence for family and elders, Senegalese traditions, and refer to settings such as home and the beach. For a fishing town, this last reference is particularly relevant.

Lastly, rendering texts as culturally relevant as possible seems to be a mandate that inspectors may readily emphasize with teachers. My final day at the site happened to coincide with a visit from the regional education inspector. She was visiting Monsieur Diouf's sixth-grade class as I observed that morning. In doing my final interview with Monsieur Diouf (host teacher), he explained how the inspector had suggested a way in which the present text could be even more culturally relevant. Days earlier he had put a text upon the board of a letter from a Senegalese child to a French friend. He pulled the letter directly from the *Guide Pédagogique*. The inspector had suggested replacing the name of the town in the original text with the name of the school's town. Although in that same interview, Monsieur Diouf continued to insist that the culture was not present at school:

> *Je t'avais dit que la culture, je sentais pas la culture dans ce qu'on fait ici à l'école. Je ne le sens pas la culture.* / I had told you that as for culture, I didn't feel that culture is present in what we do at school. I don't feel culture at all." (2nd Interview)

Monsieur Diouf nonetheless found the inspector's suggestion to be worthwhile. He understood that following the inspector's suggestion would make the text more interesting for students.

Here I have presented a number of texts that illustrate the point that teachers raised with me, that is, culture is very present within the texts that guide lessons. These texts serve as the cornerstone of the new *Curriculum* and represent a significant effort to connect with students' lived realities and cultures.

Seizing Learning Moments

In addition to the content of texts, teachers often expressed that they take advantage of learning moments to reinforce cultural values and messages. In this way, local cultures and Indigenous knowledges become part and parcel of the lesson. Contrary to the literature that portrays African formal schooling environments as detached from local realities, participants' commentaries indicate that certain elements of local cultures pass readily through the school's gate with students and teachers as they enter the school grounds. In this section, I discuss how teachers recognize instances in which something has occurred in classroom that needs redress and teachers take the opportunity to reinforce morals and values. Note that many of these discussions take place in Wolof. These values are often in accordance with Senegalese or Muslim culture. In this way, teachers act as moral agents and cultural reinforcers. Here, I present two instances as illustration.

During an interview with Madame Diagne, one of the school's two Arabic language and religious instruction teachers, she explains how she uses such learning moments to reinforce Muslim culture. She explained:

> *Parfois aussi, ci bir classe bi, xale bi, dé def dara, benn comportement boo xamne, peut-être, dafa ñakk kersa. Waara solul sol bu baax. Xam nga ñoon, xam nanu xol bu boon. Walla langagam, langagam baaxul. Dafa waax loo xamne dafa insolent. Comme ça, damay baay suma leçon, ma transformer loolu en leçon. Ma indil ko noon, "lan mooy sunu valeurs? Il faut d'abord yo, nga xam sa bopp. D'abord, sa culture ba ak sa réligion ba." Toujours mangi joox exemple ci réligion ba. /* Sometimes, too, in the middle of class, a child does something, a sort of behavior that might be lacking in "*kersa*" [value of modesty and self-respect]. You should wear proper clothes. You know they dress improperly. Or their language, their language is wrong. Or they say something that's insolent. Something like that, I go off my lesson and I turn what happened into a lesson. I bring it to them and say, "what are our values? You first need to know yourselves. First of all, it's your culture and your religion." I always use religious examples. (Interview)

Madame Diagne's commentary highlights how she immediately shifts from her prepared lesson to address issues that contradict society's values. As she indicates, her explanations will almost always emphasize the Muslim religion. She also seems to imply a shared culture among herself and students in her question, "what are our values?" This further reinforces the notion that despite ethnic diversity, there are common cultural elements that can be identified as Muslim or Senegalese and that this common thread indeed has a place within the school grounds.

A second illustration of teachers seizing on learning moments to reinforce cultural attributes comes directly from classroom observations. While attending Madame Sarr's 3rd grade class, a student's commentary provoked such a learning opportunity. During this lesson, Madame Sarr was reviewing a text with students called "*Le Projet d'Amina* / Amina's Project" (see full text in a section above). As I indicated earlier, the text is about a widow named Amina, and how she worked over a period of time to save up money to buy a house for herself and her children. When Madame Sarr asked students to provide examples of what they plan to do in the future to make enough money to buy a house, a student answered that she would go from house to house asking for money. Madame Sarr quickly responded to the student's comment in the following exchange:

> Madame Sarr: *Ah! Est-ce que ça c'est bon?* / Ah! Is that a good thing?
>
> Students: *Non! /* No! [The teacher repeats so that other students can hear.]
>
> Madame Sarr: *Il faut travailler. C'est pas bon. Il faut faire comme ça [makes gesture with her hands – difficult work/tired] pour avoir de l'argent. Mais demander, c'est pas bon. Donc, Amina, elle a pu demander de l'argent mais elle ne l'a pas fait. Elle n'a pas fait – eh? Elle a été très fatiguée. Elle ne dormait pas. Elle se levait très tôt le matin pour aller au marché, acheter des pagnes et les revendre. Le soir, elle se couchait tard. D'accord. Donc, pour avoir quelque chose, il faut, il faut, bien travailler.* / You should work. It's not good. You should

> work like this (makes gesture with her hands - difficult work/tired) to have money. But asking for money, it's not good. So, Amina, she could have asked for money but she didn't do it. She didn't do it - uh? She was very tired. She didn't sleep. She woke up very early to go to the market, buy pieces of fabric and resell them. The evening, she went to bed late. Okay. So, to obtain something, you have to, you have to work hard. (Fieldnotes)

This passage provides an example of a teacher seizing a learning moment to emphasize the cultural value of working hard with her students. Such activities relate to a number of Wolof values, including *jom* (determination) and *situra* (discreteness, especially in face of problems). There are several conjectures as to why the student made the comment in the first place, especially given the teacher had already explained the text and made the comment that Amina did not go house-to-house panhandling. Firstly, it is possible that the student misunderstood the French used in the lesson. As a result, her comment would be out of context. Another possibility may be that the student lives in a difficult situation where her mother is forced to ask people for money. A third possibility may reflect a traditional practice of students going house-to-house asking for money on certain holidays (*Korité* and *Tam Xarit*), similar to what children in more Western contexts might do as they collect candy from neighbors on Halloween. Regardless of the reason for the student's answer, Madame Sarr was quick to respond and took advantage of an opportunity to impress the value of hard work and determination upon the students in her class.

Lastly, in discussions with participants in the student focus group, it became evident that children may often appreciate these instances when teachers interrupt their planned lesson to provide redirection. During the last focus group conversation, my research associate and I discussed students' general impressions of schooling. When we asked students to identify what they liked most about school, two students said "the

teachers" and particularly the advice that they provided. As one student, Abou Ba, positively noted about his interactions with Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher), "*Des saïs, bu nu jengal, la ñu conseiller.* / Sometimes when we are learning he gives us advice" (Focus Group). Students seem to recognize that teachers' advice is useful within their lives outside of school. Indeed, teachers play a significant role in shaping students' worldviews. Here, I have shown their role in seizing upon learning moments to reinforce cultural morals and values.

Les Enquêtes (Student Investigations)

The practice of sending students into the community to research certain topics may represent the most significant pedagogical attempt to integrate local cultures and knowledges within formal classrooms. Teachers and students refer to the practice as performing *"les enquêtes"* or investigations. According to research participants, *les enquêtes* is a central feature of the new *Curriculum.* In this section, I will provide an introduction to how *les enquêtes* are implemented, including examples observed during the research period, and conclude with an examination of the benefits and limitations of this method. The latter will specifically address how this practice frames local knowledge within formal education.

The activity of *les enquêtes* lends itself to use in almost all subject areas, including history, geography, art, religion, *Vivre dans son milieu* / Living in your environment*, Vivre ensemble /* Living together[15]*,* and even science. It was indicated, however, that *les enquêtes* are not utilized in math lessons (Madame Ndoye, 2nd grade

[15] For a more detailed explanation of these subjects, see Chapter 7, Cultural Integration by Subject.

teacher, Interview), nor did I observe any such math lessons during the research period. Teachers provided the following examples of how they may use *les enquêtes* to elaborate a lesson:

- explore the history of the village or school;
- address various illnesses as part of *Vivre dans son milieu* lessons;
- demonstrate how to use a family tree (Madame Diallo, 3rd grade, Fieldnotes); and
- investigate topics like "*la famille, tribu et éthnie, affaires yo yu. Les sols dans ma régions, affaires yo yu. Men nga jel ci géographie. Men nga jel ci histoire /* family, tribe and ethnic group, things like that. The soil in my region, things like that. You can do it in geography. You can do it in history" (Madame Diouf, 4th grade teacher, Interview).

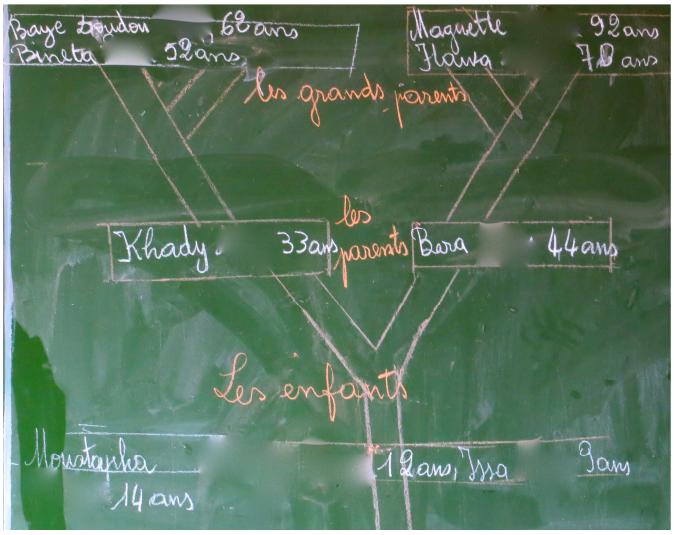
Overall, teachers indicated that it is a flexible technique that they employ in many contexts.

The process of guiding students through an *enquête* is rather formulaic. The teacher identifies the topic and the questions to answer as part of a homework assignment. The students may be able to choose to whom to go for information, often times a parent. On the other hand, the teacher may identify a particular person or individuals for students to visit, for example, the village chief. After completing the investigation, students bring their findings into the classroom as they would any homework assignment. When the teacher is ready to return to that subject, he/she will ask the students to take out their findings. The teacher may lead the lesson calling on students to provide examples from what they found. However, an alternative (and perhaps, preferred) method seems to be students forming groups and through discussion, distilling

the correct information through a process of regroupings. Eventually, representatives from a small number of larger groups will go to the board to present agreed-upon responses. Of course, the nature of the information will also determine if the group method is used. For instance, if the information is highly variable, such as for a family tree, a consensus is irrelevant. However, if the task requires identifying shared information such as the founding date of the village, the group consensus method may be used. In all cases, the teacher does a final synthesis from these presentations supplementing with his/her own information.

While observing instruction, I was fortunate to observe two lessons that showcased the use of *les enquêtes*: a history lesson about the family tree in Madame Diallo's 3rd grade class and a science lesson on soil types in Monsieur Ba's 5th grade class. For the family tree lesson, each student came to class with a paragraph that identified the names of their mother, father, and grandparents along with their dates of birth. The teacher put up one student's family tree as an example (Fieldnotes). I include a photo from the history lesson as illustration below.

Figure 6.2: Picture: Family tree lesson [Last names removed]

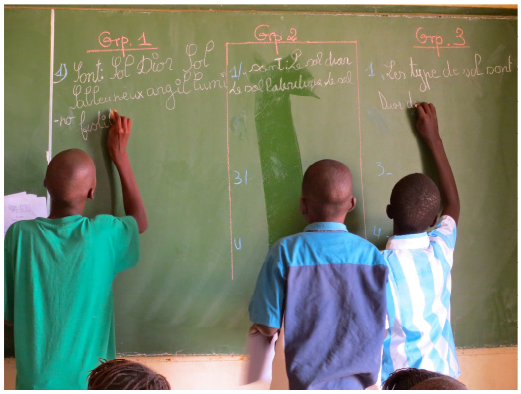


However, here I will focus on the science lesson from Monsieur Ba's class, as according to teachers, it is the less obvious subject for incorporating Indigenous or local knowledge. The *enquête* assignment is as follows*:*

> *Science: Enquête 1. Quels sont les différents types de sol? 2. Le lieu où vous habitez quel est le type de sol; connaissez vous des endroits où il est différent? 3. Citez 3 causes de la dégradation du sol? 4. Comment peut-on protéger le sol contre les agents de destruction.* / Science: Investigation. 1. What are the different types of soil? 2. What is the type of soil where you live; do you know areas where it is different? 3. Cite 3 causes of soil degradation? 4. How can we protect the soil from destruction. [sic]

For the most part, Monsieur Ba led the class through the process described above. In this classroom, students were already sitting in groups of 6-8 students. They began with a discussion in this smaller group, then chose a representative. This representative met with other representatives from groups within the same columns of desks. They met at the back of the room to compare their answers. From this sub-group, they decided on one set of answers and a representative put up their agreed-upon response on the board. (See Figure 6.3 below).

Figure 6.3: Picture: Student representatives at board



After the three representatives finished at the board, Monsieur Ba explained that he would *"valider*/validate" the answers. As he assessed the answers, students expressed considerable interest in the activity. If the group's answer proved to be correct, a number of students began to clap and cheer. Throughout the activity, the teacher used both French and Wolof to comment on students' work. As it was time for recess, the students took a break and upon their return to the classroom, Monsieur Ba put up the summary from the lesson and had students copy it in their notebooks. They did not copy down the student work. In explaining the summary, Monsieur Ba continued to employ code-switching between French and Wolof. After he did the summary, he went around to each group with a book containing photographs of soil, describing as he went. The entire process of reviewing student responses to the *enquête* and doing a summary took approximately 90 minutes: 60 minutes to synthesize and present student responses and 30 minutes for the summary and copying into notebooks.

Discussions with teachers indicate there are many benefits to using *les enquêtes* in the classroom. The two principle reasons are that *les enquêtes* 1) facilitate teaching, and 2) enable teachers to connect with students' parents. In many ways, *les enquêtes* aid teachers in making lessons easier and more efficient. Many participants expressed that

this technique provides an efficient model for students doing a homework exercise and then exploiting it within a subsequent lesson. As students will have done the first part of the activity for homework, they begin a lesson already familiar with the subject matter. Madame Diouf (4th grade) explained that students will have basic notions about the topic, which also encourages student participation:

> *leçon, boo leen ko joxé sur enquête dañu dem seen parenti di yeen leen ko expliquer. Boo tudd moom rekk ñipp dina participer parce que def nanu ko ker ga ba paré. Am nanu ci notions daal. Dunu togg di xolé.* / Lesson, if you give it to them as an investigation, they go to the parents who will explain it to them. You only have to mention the lesson and everyone will participate because they've already done it. They have some ideas about it. They don't just sit there staring. (Interview)

Secondly, and somewhat surprisingly, teachers expressed that such investigations are well supported by parents. Given financial and other burdens that parents face, I found this to be an unexpected finding. When I pressed one teacher to describe the way that parents react to *les enquêtes*, Madame Ndoye (2nd grade) replied that parents are very interested in these activities. Moreover, *les enquêtes* are a good way to reach out to the community and express interest in their cultures:

> *Les parents? Ils réagissent très bien. Ils réagissent très bien. Ca leurs intéresse même. Ca leur fait plaisir. Ils trouvent que si la maîtresse fait des enquêtes c'est parce que elle s'intéresse à eux, à leur culture. Et comme moi, par exemple, je n'habite pas ici. Si je fais des enquêtes sur [town name], ça les rend fières. Tu comprends? Ça les rend fières. Et puis, si tu occupes leurs enfants.* / The parents? They react very well. They react very well. It even interests them. It makes them happy. They find that if the teacher does an investigation it's because she is interested in them and their culture. And, like me, for example, I'm not from here. If I do an investigation about [town name], that makes them proud. Do you understand? That makes them proud. And plus, you are giving their children something to do. (Madame Ndoye, 2nd grade teacher, Interview)

In this manner, *les enquêtes* represents a significant gesture from the school and its personnel indicating interest in local cultures and knowledges. Such a technique strongly

counters the literature on African education that identifies schooling as alienating and unrelated to children's experiences.

Furthermore, the exercise of locating knowledge within the community alters the school's role as sole provider of information. As one teacher expressed, the act of sending students into the community to find information that they bring back and discuss with their classmates drastically alters the classroom power dynamic between students and teachers. Certainly, *les enquêtes* brings students into the act of creating knowledge. Monsieur Sy explained how in assigning students with such activities, teachers are instructing students to go towards knowledge. Back in the classroom, students compare their results to arrive at knowledge. Lastly, the teacher provides a final presentation and affirms new knowledge (Monsieur Sy, Veteran floating teacher, Interview). This description is highly insightful and points directly at the role of teachers in knowledge production. Such a process has great potential for a critical acknowledgement and reflection of the different forms of knowledge present within student communities, such as school-produced knowledge, community-based knowledge, and/or Indigenous knowledges.

Nonetheless, despite the benefits of *les enquêtes* in altering power dynamics, enhancing efficiency, and igniting interest among both students and parents, *les enquêtes* also have their limitations. One of the weaknesses of this technique may be the burden placed on possessors of knowledge within the community. In performing interviews, I had the opportunity to meet with an individual identified by many as the *chef du village.* In actuality, he is the cousin of the current village chief, but the direct descendant of

previous chiefs and perhaps the best oral historian in the locality. As XXXX (2009)[16] points out in his compilation of this area's history, up to the 20th century, the community's aristocratic families (not griots) maintained oral histories. Accordingly, this participant is a member one of the town's most preeminent aristocratic families. Because of his historical knowledge, the school regularly sends students to him as part of investigations about the town's past. In discussing his support of the school, the oral historian made the following comment about his conversations with the school director:

> *Ma ne ka, "à chaque fois, ngeen m'envoyer xale yi...chaque fois ngeen ma envoyer xale yi, ma togg di waax ak ñoom. Eh? Xolal sacrifice boobu maay def. Mais sacrifice boobu amul résultats!" Xam nga, amul résultats! Ma ne mu ni, "Faayuleen ma, benn. Deuxièmement, lii ma di leen jenga, lii danu ko waara mémoriser def ko - ki - pour que xale yi..." Parce que...ku ci ñu rekk, ni menn ko def seen bopp. Eh... Mais [his name], bu existerwutul nak? Eh?"* / I said, "every time, you send me kids...every time you send me kids, I sit and I speak with them. Eh? Look at the sacrifice I am making. But that sacrifice doesn't have any sort of results!" You know, there are no results! I said, "You don't pay me for one. Secondly, what I teach them, they should write up and memorialize/conserve it and make it into a [seems to say book] for the kids... Because...whoever comes they would be able to do it themselves. Right? ...But [his name], when he's not around any more, what are you going to do? Huh?" (Monsieur Pouye, Village historian, Interview)

The village historian's comment here is particularly rich. Not only is Monsieur Pouye pointing to the burden of responding to many students' repeated investigations but also the monotony of the exercise. He is urging the school Director to find a way to build upon his knowledge and to eternalize it in written form. Of course, this would mean no longer having students come to him for investigations. This participant's concerns also acknowledge the tension between oral and written histories. While he highly respects oral history and has voluntarily maintained his family's history, he is cognizant of its limitations. Contrary to examples from the literature in which community members may

[16] Recall that some references have been masked in the interest of anonymity.

be reluctant to share Indigenous knowledges (see Chapter 2), Monsieur Pouye advocates committing those knowledges to written form.

Lastly, while *les enquêtes* provide a clear nod to local culture and knowledge, the extent to which this remains simply symbolic merits exploration. In some ways, it seems that although students make investigations and involve community members as they search for information, these responses may be absent from the final summary. As several participants explained, teachers will have already compiled their lesson prior to reviewing student work, and it is this teacher's understanding that becomes the lesson summary. In this way, local knowledges may be exploited by teachers in order to garner student interest but this information is then repackaged and redistributed to students in a way that serves the school's purposes. School knowledge, therefore, co-opts local knowledges and transfigures them. This was evident in Monsieur Ba's transitional phrase as he went to the board to review student work. He said, "*je vais essayer de valider* / I will try to validate." Of course, a teacher is always working to help students identify correct information, but in such an exercise, the teacher's role as knowledge gatekeeper becomes even more pronounced. In this context, the teacher makes an assessment of the validity of local knowledge and determines whether or not it is incorporated as part of an official lesson summary. It is likely that such practices may illustrate concerns of the skeptics of integrating Indigenous knowledges within formal education identified in Chapter 2 (see Nakata, 2007). While surely *les enquêtes* provide a wonderful example of allowing student experiences, family, and local knowledges to permeate the classroom, the practice remains problematic. Perhaps one way to ameliorate the situation would be to foster a more critical exploration of information and knowledges that would allow for

multiple concurrent truths. Such an approach is supported within the literature on Indigenous knowledges and education as presented in Chapter 2.

Summary

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of concrete ways that this one peri-urban Senegalese school reaches towards students' realities and incorporates them within lessons. These techniques include using Wolof within instruction, as well as incorporating texts, seizing opportunities to stress local cultures and values, and implementing student investigations. While these initiatives represent but a beginning in the process of integrating local cultures within schooling, they are nonetheless illustrations that provide alternative narratives to the existent literature on schooling. This literature often presents African educational experiences as alienating and disconnected from students' lived experiences and cultures. All of these techniques take place within a schooling environment that is now framed by the new *Curriculum.* This curricular reform is itself grounded in student realities. In the next chapter, I continue my investigations of how experiences at this school may be culturally relevant according to the various school subjects present within the curriculum.

CHAPTER 7

CULTURAL INTEGRATION BY SUBJECT

> Teacher speaks in Wolof and then in French: *"Maman ne prend pas l'huile et verser ça directement dans la marmite* / Mother doesn't take the oil and pour it directly in the pot?" He asks in Wolof if Mother goes and just gets the big bottle of oil that Father buys and just pours it in (makes gesture). Students loudly say "*Non / No*!" Many are standing up, out of their seats.
>
> Teacher: *On doit faire quoi* / What should we do?
>
> Students: *Mesurer* / Measure!
>
> (Measurement lesson, Fieldnotes, Monsieur Ba's 5th grade class)

In the process of my research, it became clear that certain school subjects are more favorable to the inclusion of cultural elements than others. I will devote this present chapter to exploring how academic subjects lend themselves differently to integrating culture within lessons. This discussion rests upon the imperfect distinction between subjects that are more favorable and less favorable to integrating cultural knowledge. Obviously, there is overlap between the two categories as well as room for critique in both cases. School personnel commentaries feature prominently in this discussion, as well as data revealed by classroom observation and document review. Before delving into my analysis, I briefly outline here the various subjects within the Senegalese primary school curriculum according to the teacher's guide *(Guide Pédagogique)*.

Under the new *Curriculum*, school subjects are divided into four domains:

1. Language and Communication (oral and written)
2. Math: geometry, numerical activities, measurement, word problems
3. *Education à la Science et la Vie Sociale* (Science and Social Living Education)

4. Physical education and the arts (art, music, and theater)

Teachers repeatedly referred to the third domain as *"les éveils"* and these are further sub-divided into two groups: 1) Discovery of the world: history, geography, *Initiation Scentifique et Technique (IST)* (Science and Technology Introductory Course) and 2) Sustainable development education. This latter heading is again sub-divided into *Vivre dans son milieu* (Living in your environment) and *Vivre ensemble* (Living together). The *Curriculum's* Pedagogical Guide (*le Guide pédagogique*) stipulates that *Vivre dans son milieu* addresses issues that include the environment, the population, and health, while *Vivre ensemble* focuses on gender, peace, citizenship, human rights, and religious education.

Subjects Readily Incorporating Cultural References

In attempting to decipher which subjects receive the greatest emphasis within the curriculum, it seems it may be the first three domains with the emphasis truly being on French language acquisition and numeracy skills. One teacher, Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher), discussed how the schedule should be implemented with the Inspector when she visited. Her visit incidentally coincided with my last day at my research site. Monsieur Diouf's discussion with the inspector likely reflects some uncertainty in the transition to the new *Curriculum*, which was in its first year for 6th graders at that time. The Inspector's answer was that teachers should focus on "*ce que nous voulons étudier* / what we wish to study," demonstrating a great deal of flexibility and responsiveness. It was not necessary that teachers scrupulously follow a timed schedule. Rather, they should focus on spending some time each day on three of the

domains: French (Language and communication), math, and one of the *éveil* subjects (history, geography, IST, *Vivre dans son milieu* or *Vivre ensemble*). What Monsieur Diouf describes and what is implied by the division of school subjects as presented in the *Guide pédagogique* above is an emphasis on literacy and numeracy with auxiliary emphasis on the rest of the subjects, including the arts, history, geography, civics, physical education. In the following paragraphs, I will explore how these subjects and the weighted emphasis identified here may or may not favor integrating cultures and Indigenous knowledges within schooling.

The Arts

Without a doubt, teachers most often referred to the arts when discussing the presence of culture at school. This includes singing as well as drawing and the performing arts. As Monsieur Sy stated:

> *Oui. Bon. Xam nga - tu sais la culture ici est surtout prise par certaines matières, surtout comme chant...Dans le chant, on apprend aux gosses de chanter les chants locaux. Il y a maintenant, ce qu'on a introduit, l'art scénique, c'est à dire, faire du théâtre avec les enfants. /* Yes. Well. You know - you know that culture here is especially taken care of by certain subjects, especially like singing...In singing, we teach students to sing local songs. And there is also now, what they've introduced, theater arts, that is, doing theater with the children. (Monsieur Sy, Veteran floating teacher, Interview)

According to many research participants, it seems that singing also particularly lends itself to the inclusion of local languages, in this case, Wolof, making a strong case for its cultural relevancy. For example, when observing Monsieur Ndiaye's first grade class, he led the class in the song *Lam Lam Sai*, a traditional Wolof song (Fieldnotes). The ease with which students participated and the loud volume of their singing attested that they

had been practicing this song well before my visit. Madame Ndoye (2nd grade) also explained that she also teaches songs in French and in Wolof (Interview).

Moreover, Madame Ndoye spoke at length and with great pride about how she makes a point of devoting time to the arts each week, either the performing arts or classic arts (such as drawing). She explained to me that, while on the day that I was observing she had students copy a chalk drawing of a traditional water jug (*un canari)* that she had drawn on the board, other days, she leads activities in the performing arts *(les arts scéniques)*, which she explained involves singing, comedy, and imitations of artists. She told me at length how she often invites students to imitate local artists. She mentioned several times how much the students enjoy and participate in this activity - "*ils suivent mais après ils applaudisent. Ils rient. Ils crient. Ils jouent...De jouer un rôle, ça les amuse. Tu vois? /* they pay attention but after, they applaud. They laugh. They yell. They play...To play a role, that amuses them. You see*?*" (Madame Ndoye, 2nd grade, Interview). I mentioned the challenge of recognizing the diversity of students' cultures within the classroom. To this concern, she answered:

> *Mais les élèves qui sont pas Lébous, si tu proposes ça, ils...eux, quand ils viennent, même si tu oublies, ils vont faire leur culture. Surtout les Peuhls, parce qu'ils sont un peu ki [culturall conservative - laughs]. Ils viennent, ils chantent en Peuhl. Ils dansent en Peuhl. Mais, ce jour-là, la classe moom, c'était trop brouillant! /* But the students who aren't Lebous, if you propose it, they...they, when they come, even if you forget, they will do their culture. Especially the Pulaars, because they are a little [culturally conservative - laughs]...They come. They sing in Pulaar. They dance in Pulaar. But that day - the class man, it was so loud! (Madame Ndoye, 2nd grade, Interview)

This same teacher also reiterated the importance of taking the time to do the arts with students, particularly in the early grades. While students will learn about Senegalese history beginning in the 3rd grade, in these early grades, it is really within the arts-related

subjects that teachers have the opportunity to address culture with students.

While surely singing and the arts provide excellent platforms for incorporating local cultures and Indigenous knowledges within the classroom, these subjects are not prioritized within the curriculum. For example, during my research period, I only saw two art activities - one of which was the depiction of a pitcher on the board from a previous class (Madame Diouf's third grade class, Fieldnotes). In speaking with the Director, he lamented changes in the school system that have led to less of an emphasis on arts and sports. He contrasted the current situation with his own experience as a primary school student. For him, the arts include activities such as singing, drawing, the performing arts, and calligraphy. Moreover, class schedules certainly do not favor the teaching of the arts. Madame Ka (6th grade) identified that there are only 15 minutes a week within the class schedule dedicated to the arts (Interview). Other teachers echoed this sentiment. Madame Ka also provided a rationale for teachers' reticence to teach art activities: "*les enseignants n'ont pas cette maîtrise de cette matière* / teachers don't have a mastery of this subject" (6th grade teacher, Interview). Furthermore, few teachers also made mention of the obvious issue that the arts are not regularly assessed like the other subjects and, therefore, do not seem as important. Madame Ndoye (2nd grade) explained in detail how she assesses students but it is nonetheless once per trimester during end-of-term testing. The Director summed up the situation as the arts "*est traité en parent pauvre* / it's treated like a poor relative" (2nd Interview).

A final note about research participants' often-easy identification of the arts as an area of cultural presence within schooling is that this also represents an essentializing of culture. Rather than viewing cultures and their inherent Indigenous knowledges as rich

fonts from which to draw upon to illuminate all facets of life and learning, this identification reduces the concept of culture to its most obvious form: the arts. As conversations developed and my research period continued, I was able to prompt participants about other areas of their professions that may connect to local cultures. Similarly, classroom observations revealed additional areas. I turn my attention to these other subject areas below.

History and Geography

Contrary to the literature on African educational systems and experiences that frame them as distant and Eurocentric, my research in this one school reveals that history and geography are subject areas that accentuate local and Senegalese experiences. While a critical approach that allows teachers and students to holistically interrogate various forms of history is still lacking, for example, conversations about oral versus written history, my findings nonetheless substantiate a culturally relevant approach. In this section, I describe how history and geography teachings may be culturally relevant, including exploring student perspectives. I also provide a critique of areas to strengthen where appropriate.

Students learn about history in all six primary school grades, however, it seems that more in-depth investigations begin in grade 3. According to interview data, grades 3-6 have the greatest focus on actual events while the earlier grades focus on helping students develop a sense of the passage of time (Monsieur Sy, Veteran floating teacher, Interview). Other subjects are given greater emphasis explained the Director (1st interview). The Director also reiterated that learning about local history is one of three

steps in developing young people who are open to the world. Again, this approach supports Senghor's educational philosophy as discussed earlier. The three steps cited by the director are: "*le milieu, ouverture, et maintenant, vers l'extérieur* / their environment, opening up, and now, towards the outside" (1st interview). Such an approach indeed emphasizes local knowledges. Topics that students encounter in history lessons include the village history, succession of village chiefs, school history, and the history of the local mosque (Director 1st Interview). Many teachers conveyed that local history subjects also include a concentration on historical figures who fought against the French, such as Lat Dior, Cheikh Amadou Bamba, El Hadj Malick Sy, and Aline Sitoe Diatta. In addition, one teacher, Madame Diallo (3rd grade), emphasized that she routinely uses Wolof as an LOI in her history lessons (Interview). Using Wolof for history discussions underlines and reinforces the link between the subject and local realities and cultures.

Similarly, geography lessons also seemed to have a local focus. In an interview with the school Director, he emphasized that geography lessons lead students through exercises that will situate the school and village within the larger Senegalese context, particularly in relation to the nearby capital city of Dakar (1st Interview). According to Madame Ndoye (2nd grade), like history, in geography the early grades focus on simpler concepts, such as relationships like "heavier than," and "lighter than," or how to describe where something is located in relation to something else. Beginning in grade 3, there is more emphasis on content. This content may include waterways (such as rivers and oceans), mountains, modes of transportation, fishing, etc. - all of which can be contextualized within the local environment (Interview).

To further illustrate how geography lessons draw from local realities, I will describe here a lesson I observed in Monsieur Diouf's 6th grade class (host classroom). The lesson was on the waterways of Senegal and just beyond its borders ("*Les cours d'eau et lacs* / Waterways and lakes"). In this lesson, the teacher begins by reviewing a previous lesson on climate, which covered the types of wind, including the winds present within this very town. Monsieur Diouf then moved on to ask students where their drinking water comes from, an introduction to the larger lesson on Senegal's waterways. At the very end, he brings the lesson back to the locality of the school in asking students what they know about the various local lakes, all of which are within walking distance of the school. The following is a fieldnotes excerpt from the end of the lesson:

> Teacher continues, "*en mars, avril, les femmes viennent aux lacs. Qu'est-ce qu'elles font?* / in March, April, women come to the lakes. What do they do?" A number of students are snapping their fingers for the teacher's attention. The student called upon by the teacher volunteers, "*elles tirent du sel* / they take out the salt." The teacher replies, "*et quel est la couleur?* / and what is its color?" There is a lot of snapping from students, "*rose* / pink." The teacher asks another question, "*Pour quoi ?* / Why?" Lots of snapping from students... The teacher continues and asks them what they can do in these bodies of water. Students provide the following answers: "*se laver* / wash oneself, *faire le linge* / wash laundry..." The teacher says, "*vous n'êtes pas des paysans* / you do not live in rural areas" but what can you do? Students responded that they use the water to clean sheep, water trees and fields, and practice agricultural activities. (Fieldnotes)

From this above lesson and through discussions with research participants, there is no indication that students are learning more about foreign countries and previous colonial powers in geography lessons than they are about their own community and town. This finding runs counter to the literature and contributes to the significance of this study.

Moreover, centering Senegalese history within learning is also supported by the 1979 policy on the *Organisation de l'Enseignement élémentaire* (Structure of Elementary

Education). This is a seminal document that continues to shape school content even with the new *Curriculum* (Educational consultant, Personal Communication). A cursory study of the policy provides evidence for particular emphasis on phrases such as "Senegal," "my village," and "my community" as part of history and geography lessons. This is particularly true for the grades 3 and 4 but it also continues through the end of the primary school cycle. In grades 5 and 6, the third phase of elementary education, the document places more emphasis on the national sphere and administration, beginning with the school and its regulations and moving to the national level, where lessons should discuss the Constitution, government, and military. My own classroom observations provide evidence that teachers implement this recommendation, as I participated in lessons that included the Constitutional Court *(le cour constitutionnel)* and the different branches of the military *(les forces armées)* at the sixth-grade level (Fieldnotes).

Furthermore, my discussions with students triangulate the local relevancy of history lessons. During our focus group meetings, students confirmed that the history they learn at school is relevant and that this makes it engaging and interesting to them. When I asked the focus group participants which subjects they liked, four of the five students responded that they liked history. Two of the students explained their reasoning in the following manner:

> Pape Diop: *Am na lu xam né, fekkéwunu ko, comme la traite négrière, li ak lennen. Fekkéwunu ko mais bu ñuy ci waax dinga ko xaMonsieur* / There are things that we didn't witness. Like the slave trade and others. We didn't witness it but if we talk about it, you know about it.
>
> Khady Diallo: *Histoire...Histoire, ñungi laakanté suñu mame yi, nu ñu doon - leur vécu.* / History...History, we talk with each other about our ancestors, what they used to - their lives. *(Large Focus Group #3)*

Additionally, Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher), indicated being aware of students' predilection for history. He states clearly that history lessons are often successful because they relate to students' lived experiences. As he explained,

> *Quand tu parles de l'histoire et quand tu parles des royaumes et autres, ils sont interéssés. Ils te regardent. Ils ont envie de connaître leur histoire*. / When you speak about history and when you speak about the kingdoms and other things, they are interested. They look at you. They want to know their history (Monsieur Diouf, 6th grade teacher, 1st interview).

While my findings demonstrate that history and geography topics often include local and national themes contradicting much of the literature, they also revealed a key area for growth: increased critical awareness. I present two examples here. The first is from Madame Diallo's 3rd grade lesson on the family tree (described and pictured above in Chapter 6). While this lesson incorporates the culturally relevant practice of *les enquêtes* (investigations), the presentation of the family tree remains largely Eurocentric in its conception of a nuclear family. Discussions, particularly with focus group participants, demonstrated that many of them live with grandparents, namesakes, uncles and aunts, cousins, step-siblings deriving from polygamy, etc. While the history lesson on the family tree introduces students to an important tool, the underlying assumption of family structure might be better adapted for local realities in order to render the exercise even more culturally relevant.

The second example of an area for growth illustrates the need for greater critical awareness of how history is presented. For instance, I observed a lesson about the history of the slave trade in the 15th century in Monsieur Diouf's (host teacher) 6th grade class that was highly Eurocentric. The information on the slave trade positioned Europeans in the foreground with Africans as the victims of slavery. The lecture also included the

discovery of Saint Louis by a Frenchman, a city in the north of Senegal and the former capital of French West Africa (Fieldnotes; Memo). While the lesson covered a number of sub-topics, I was struck that students were asked to remember the name of the European who discovered the city. This was striking because African settlements had long existed in that area, and even had a local name, *Ndar.* Similarly, the slave trade was also a very complex affair, with some Africans also being complicit. There also were former African traditions of "slavery" that long outdated Western slavery. While undoubtedly European slavery was heinous and inhumane, I wondered if there might be a more Afrocentric and complex way to have presented this lesson. In many ways, this sort of Eurocentric lesson aligns with examples from the literature, which present African education systems as alienating and damaging.

During our second interview with Monsieur Diouf, I probed to see if such a lesson might also be an opportunity to discuss some of these more complex issues, much in line with social justice-minded recommendations of Dei (2000a; 2008) from his work in Ghana. Alfa, my research associate, was also present for this interview, although he had not attended the original lesson. I also asked Monsieur Diouf if such a lesson might foster an opportunity to discuss African forms of slavery that had long existed, as well as the Wolof concept of *jam*, or slave. Both Monsieur Diouf and Alfa, my research associate, felt that such a topic was irrelevant. In responding to my question about the "discovery" of Saint Louis, I noted the following:

> Both [Monsieur Diouf] and [Alfa] said that sure, there were inhabitants before the French in Saint Louis, but that it's the French that really marked the history. Both spoke about Faidherbe [a famous French governor of Saint Louis]. Both also stipulated that kids would learn local history via a historian (like the one we went to see) but that it's an oral history (this seemed to insinuate that they value it less...) (Fieldnotes).

Despite the seemingly local relevancy of many of the lessons I observed, such a response clearly demonstrated to me a lack of a critical approach to history, as well as a lack of space for local history. In discussing the issue further with Alfa during a wrap-up meeting, he commented that although history lessons address prominent figures from Senegal and the West African sub-region, particularly in the fight against the French, African history and European history are taught separately (Wrap-up conversation with research associate) rather than in a merged or comparative way. Because they are taught as separate events, this allows for compartmentalism as well as perhaps the continued sense that African history does not hold the same merit as European history, a common post-colonial perspective. Again, these arguments mark areas for growth within the current system: 1) even greater attention to assumptions underlying key concepts, such as family, and, 2) achieving greater critical awareness and in turn, fostering a pluralistic approach more in line with social justice. These criticisms aside, this study nonetheless identifies many ways in which history as taught at this particular school is culturally relevant.

Vivre dans son Milieu **and** ***Vivre Ensemble***

Like the arts, history, and geography, the two subjects *Vivre dans son milieu* (formerly health education) and *Vivre ensemble* (formerly civic education) also provide excellent platforms for connecting to students' lives and cultural backgrounds. In this section, I will briefly touch upon the first of these, while concentrating on *Vivre ensemble* and providing illustrations.

During my research period, I observed one *Vivre dans son milieu* lesson. It was in Monsieur Diouf's 6th grade class, and it addressed the issue of pollution, speaking of various facets of local culture and making reference to undesirable activities and polluters within the community. I will present a more detailed description of that lesson below in a subsequent section. Monsieur Diop (1st grade) identified a number of other topics that might also be covered in a *Vivre dans son milieu* lesson, including illnesses, with emphasis on malaria, HIV/AIDS, diarrhea, etc., illnesses that the teacher points out are prevalent in their setting[17] (Interview). Indeed, the very nature of the subject *Vivre dans son milieu* / Living in your environment is to relate to topics of a local nature. This point came up in many conversations with research participants, including with the school Director and Monsieur Ndiaye (1st grade). As Monsieur Ndiaye indicated,

> *Quand on dit, Vivre dans son milieu, ça dépend du milieu où on vie. Par exemple...ce serait très mal barré de parler d'un autre village que je ne connais pas, mais comme je suis à [town name], et maintenant on dit "école et milieu..." Donc, on travail en fonction des réalités de ce milieu là, par exemple, à [town name].* / When they say *Vivre dans son milieu* [Living in your environment], it depends on the environment in which you live. For example, we would be off to a bad start if I spoke about another village that I didn't know, but since I'm in [town name], and now we say, "school and environment..." So, we work in function of the realities of this here environment, for example, [town name]. (Monsieur Ndiaye, Interview)

Clearly, *Vivre dans son mi*lieu lessons should ground themselves in the local context.

Similarly, its sister-subject, *Vivre ensemble,* provides even greater opportunity to stress local sensibilities within the classroom. According to research participants, through *Vivre ensemble* lessons, teachers address topics such as self-respect, hygiene, and appropriate behavior vis-à-vis parents. Monsieur Ndiaye (1st grade) described how *Vivre*

[17] Note that the rate of people living with HIV/AIDS in Senegal is estimated at 0.5% (UNAIDS, 2012), very low compared to many other African countries. The other illnesses, malaria and diarrhea are much more menacing.

ensemble teaches students to position themselves within society. They learn who they are, which community they belong to, and what is normative for that society. According to this teacher, through such lessons students learn how to be more successful in their relationships with others within their home and their community. He explains:

> *on informe l'enfant sur....sur la tradition, sur le bon comportement qu'il doit adopter pour être une personne digne, pour être une personne sociable parce que la personne n'est pas une personne isolée mais on vie en sociéte, surtout en Afrique, on vie dans une maison composée par - il y a père, grandpère, etc.* / it informs children about...about traditions, about the proper behavior they should adopt to be a dignified person, to be a sociable person, because people aren't just isolated individuals but we live within society. Especially in Africa, we live in a house made up of - there is the father, grandfather, etc. (Monsieur Ndiaye, 1st grade teacher, Interview).

In addition, teachers also described how this subject is malleable and that teachers can adapt their lessons to current issues and concerns of students. At the same time, teachers pull topics directly from the *Curriculum*. As Madame Diallo explained, "*C'est dans la planification. On te donne une planification de trois mois. Tu tires les leçons dedans.* / It's in the planning. You're given a three-month planning. You pull lessons from there" (3rd grade teacher, Interview). Such flexibility further acknowledges and supports the continued dynamism of cultures and illustrates how this current curriculum is able to keep pace.

As indicated above, *Vivre ensemble* lessons may address a myriad of issues. Here, I include two examples as illustration. First, Monsieur Ba (5th grade) described how immediately prior to the Tijaaniyya *Gammu* holiday, he created a lesson on interreligious understanding. The lesson addressed commonalities across Senegal's four Muslim brotherhoods as well as emphasized that Christians and Muslims should get along and support one another (Interview). Such a lesson draws upon Senegal's tradition of religious

tolerance.

Secondly, I observed a *Vivre ensemble* lesson in Madame Diallo's 3rd grade class that was entitled *Respect des parents* / Respect for Parents. The teacher began her lesson by emphasizing that neighbors are relatives too: "*bonne voisinage - mbokk la* / being a good neighbor - is being a relative." The lesson continued with many other examples of being polite - especially towards parents. At one point, Madame Diallo places great emphasis on respecting mother and father, in particular:

> *Yaay ak Papa, danu leen waara respecter. So leen waaxé ak ñoom, danga waara sugg. Danga waara sugg. Su la yooni, danga waara dow (gesture of hands passing each other vertically – quickly). Bul taxawal ci mbed mi. Bo la yonni do ko faté. [Gesturing to head with index finger]. Parce que Yallah, ganaw Yallah, Yaay ak Papa lañuy waax. Yaay, dafa sonn. Yaay dafa umb pendant neuf mois. Dafa sonn. Yenn, xam ngeen seen yaay bu umbé naka lanu mel, eh ? Elles sont toujours fatiguées, comme ça [hand behind back, stomach out]. Menunu saax doox. Eh ? Nungi tuddi. Nungi febar. Ba boli, papa dé xé, bu indi tutti dépenses, moom muy dem wuut xalis pour motali ko. Et yenn saïs, à l'école, sont les mamans qui viennent toujours ici, eh ? Pour poser seen doom bi, par rapport à yennen yi, nu muy jenga.* / We should respect Mother and Father. If you are speaking with them, you should look down. You should look down. If they send you for something, you should run (gesture of hands passing each other vertically - quickly). Don't waste time outside. If they send you for something, don't forget what they sent you to get. [Gesturing to head with index finger.] Because they say behind God is Mother and Father. Mother, she's tired. She's pregnant for nine months. She's tired. You, you know how your mothers are when they are pregnant, right? They are always tired, like this [hand behind back, stomach out.] They can't even walk. Right? They lay down. They are sick. And on top of that, Father, when he goes out in the morning, when he comes back with some money, she's the one who goes to get additional money to complete it. And sometimes, at school, it's the mothers who always come here, right? To ask questions about their children - in regards to the others, how is he/she doing at school (Fieldnotes/Transcribed from video).

This excerpt is a small but significant passage from a much longer lesson, in which Madame Diallo expands upon how children should respect their parents. She fills her lesson with cultural references and assumptions - for example, large families, mother being responsible for raising children and preparing meals, deference that children show

to elders in diverting their eyes, etc. Clearly this lesson showcases and emphasizes local values. As I discussed above in Chapter 6, this lesson was one of two lessons that I observed, in which Wolof functioned as the LOI.

In addition to the subject areas I have addressed above (the arts, history, geography, *Vivre dans son milieu* and *Vivre ensemble*), the formalized Arabic language and religious instruction class provides an unparalleled opportunity for integrating locally-based and valued knowledge within the official school day. I discuss this subject area next.

Arabic Language and Religious Instruction

As indicated above, the Arabic language and religious instruction class, although only two hours per week, may provide the most culturally near instruction of students' entire week. In this section, I describe the class, including my observations and information garnered through interviews. I also probe further into the history of this example of curriculum reform, finding yet again, ways in which this subject may reflect the needs of parents and students.

Within the school week at this particular school, two hours are devoted to Arabic language and religious instruction. One hour addresses Arabic as a foreign language while the other hour provides students with Muslim religious teachings. Interestingly, this bifurcation may diverge from official policies, however, as Sarre (2002) describes religious instruction as occupying the full two hours. According to interview data, the one hour devoted to Arabic language includes reading, writing, and dictation exercises (Madame Diagne). Two teachers are dedicated to Arabic language and religious

instruction and are referred to as the Arabic teachers (*les maîtresses d'Arabe*). Both have undergone schooling that parallels French instruction within formal channels. In this way, these teachers are the most specialized of all of the teaching staff. One teacher is assigned to "A" classes while the other is assigned to "B" classes.

During my time at site, I observed one Arabic language lesson and one Muslim religion lesson. In alignment with my sampling rationale, detailed in Chapter 3, the two classes I observed were delivered by the "B" classroom Arabic teacher. Unfortunately, due to his/her illness, I was unable to interview this teacher, but was able to sit down with Madame Diagne, the "A" classroom teacher, and the more veteran of the two.

In observing the "B" classroom Arabic teacher's classes, they were highly interactive featuring teacher-led oral presentations with students' choral or individual repetition. The teacher also wrote up Arabic on the board. The Arabic language and religion class is also unique because the LOI alternates between Arabic, French, and Wolof. I observed the "A" classroom teacher using much Wolof in her teaching. Similarly, Madame Diagne explained that while she uses French herself, other colleagues across the country may not have a French background and would teach the course entirely in Wolof/Arabic (Interview). In order to provide a thick description of this subject area, I include that the language class I observed was a second grade class on sweeping and other chores, concentrating largely on vocabulary acquisition, while the religion class focused on the importance of prayer in Islam and how students should pray. I provide here an excerpt from my fieldnotes from the religion class. For efficiency's sake, I translated these notes directly from Wolof to English. They detail the teacher's explanation to students:

- How do you hold your arms? - Do you *yee* (speak softly)? Or do you *biral* (speak loudly)? (Wolof words). [Explained] how many *rakk* [sequences] you do, when

you can pay them back and when you can't if you miss a prayer. You can pay it back until 10 pm, but it is much better if you do it at the actual prayer times. There is also an extra one you could do at night.

- A few students asked questions. She [teacher] also spoke about how you should pray: take your time, do it right. Otherwise, your prayer doesn't make it up the 7 skies. She talked about various things on your shoulders – are they angels that note what you do?
- She spoke about *crus bi* [prayer beads] – and if you don't have a *crus*, how you count [on your fingers]. She said "*julli mooy sunu base* / prayer is our foundation." (Fieldnotes)

The topic of performing prayer is one that is directly applicable in students' lives. It also very likely supplements what many students are learning in their homes. In general, students seemed very comfortable with this style of teaching, as I noticed a high level of participation. They even asked questions of the teacher, something that was not as readily observable in French-dominated classes (Fieldnotes). Although an examination of student engagement is beyond the scope of this dissertation, several factors may contribute to a higher level of participation: the nature of the subject matter, Wolof as LOI, as well the lower-cognitive skills that such repetition required.

While religious instruction is officially optional for all students (Government of Senegal, 2004), in practice at this school, it seems optional only for Christians. Both the school Director and Madame Diagne (Arabic teacher) identified examples of Christian students who decided to opt out of the class and sit in the courtyard during the class period. At the same time, Madame Diagne also provided instances of Christian students who remained in the classroom with their parents' full support (Interview). In addition, while the policy fosters both Muslim and Christian education within the public schools, it seems that much more has been done to determine the Muslim curriculum than for Christian instruction (see Sarre, 2002). In regards to the school that is the focus of this

present study, there was indeed no mention of Christian education. It seems that integrating religious instruction at school has been interpreted as specifically pertaining to Muslim education.

History of Religious Instruction

Because religious instruction represents a significant example of how school curriculum diverges from the French curriculum demonstrating preference for local priorities, thus contradicting the literature on African education, I provide a brief history of this reform. Where appropriate, I also include comments from participants to demonstrate their understanding and to complement information gathered from the literature. The history of religious instruction as an official subject matter in Senegalese formal education is somewhat unclear and merits further investigation beyond the background information presented in this study. Nonetheless, participant contributions help to obtain a more nuanced understanding.

To begin, it seems that religious instruction was officially integrated in 2002 after several failed attempts, beginning with a declaration in 1981 during the *Etats généraux de l'éducation et de la formation* (Education and Training General Assembly) and then later in 1986 (Charlier, 2002; Sarre, 2002). Several motivators may explain the rationale for the move to officially including religious instruction within the school week. For instance, policymakers sought to promote religious tolerance and avoid fundamentalism through instruction in all revealed religions, particularly Islam and Christianity (Sarre, 2002). The decision may also have been largely influenced by pressures from external donors to achieve universal schooling as part of EFA initiatives (Charlier, 2002). By including religious instruction, more parents might agree to have their children participate

in formal schooling rather than Quoranic schools, often seen as competitors (see André & Demonsant, 2012). Similarly, Monsieur Sy (Veteran floating teacher) explained how the previous president, Abdoulaye Wade, had included integrating religious instruction within his campaign platform and that he understood the maneuver as a gesture to appease religious leaders (Interview). To further illustrate, Charlier (2002) points to how the same declaration that enforced integrating religious education into schooling simultaneously identified Quoranic schools (*daaras*) as formal schools, thus drastically increasing the number of children qualifying for inclusion within attendance calculations.

Perhaps most importantly for this present study, religious instruction within formal schooling may have been motivated by the desire to respond to the needs of parents and children (Charlier, 2002). This argument was certainly not lost on Madame Diagne (Arabic teacher), who echoed that the decision may have been a response to parental fatigue of having to juggle two different educational systems. She also indicated that by including Muslim education within the school week, parents would be able to save money otherwise spent on outside religious instruction (Interview). Certainly among the multifold contributing factors leading to the formalization of religious instruction within the educational system, there seems to be an element of popular support and/or pressure that has encouraged its integration. Further investigation into this subject area may prove to be quite intriguing.

Regardless of the official history of religious instruction, it became clear through interviews with participants that religious instruction had nonetheless existed at this particular school long prior to the 2002 official mandate. Both the school Director and Madame Diagne (Arabic teacher) expressed that in practice, religious instruction had

always existed. Neither participant was able to identify a date when instruction changed to incorporate religious instruction. To illustrate, the school Director stated that it had existed within the Senegalese school system well before the school's establishment in 1980 (1st Interview). Similarly, Madame Diagne described how religious instruction was already present at the school when she arrived as a teacher in 1983 (Interview). Furthermore, speaking the Arabic language and practicing the Muslim religion are seen as intrinsically connected in the minds of many Senegalese. Charlier (2002) acknowledges the interconnectedness of the Arabic language with religion and how many individuals view someone who can recite from the Quoran as being well-educated or a good Muslim.

More generally, a strong religious presence within schools prior to 2002 is also acknowledged by Charlier (2002). He further argues that one of the benefits of integrating religious instruction formally was to allow administrators greater authority over Muslim practices already present within schools. This included the establishment of prayer areas within the school grounds, and in some cases, the construction of a mosque (Charlier, 2002). For this particular school, Muslim influences are present implicitly within many interactions (see Chapter 5), through formal instruction in general education classes (see Chapter 6), and in teacher attitudes (see Chapter 8). The Friday prayer among teaching personnel stands as strong evidence of how religion has long been present within the school's practices.

Even so, providing religious instruction prior to the mandate demonstrates agency and a commitment to cultural relevancy. Madame Diagne acknowledges that when she first began teaching, Arabic instruction was officially limited to foreign language

instruction. She nonetheless interpreted the two hours per week with students as an opportunity for religious instruction. As she explains, when we asked for greater clarity about religious education, she responded:

> *Wow. Bookul ci woon. Mais, man, lu taax ma ko daan def, ma ne, "le fait que xale bi de jenga Arabe woor na menn profitoo jenga dine am aussi ci école bi." Wow. Parce que boobu, école bi ñu la jengal danu de na "xalé yi menn na def ay grammaire, ay recitations, na def ay chants." Mais recitations, chants, comme xale yi danu ko doon def en Français, damay ko doon remplacer ak benn matière réligieuse, soit waax u Prophète bi [may he rest in peace] walla Al Quoran, binda leen, walla par fois causérie ci dine...Mais nu dem ba mu yagg, benn note de service ginn, comme quoi, leggi, dañu waara def éducation réligieuse. Wow. Man daal, lii ma fateliku, ba ma ñowe ci école bi en 82/83 ba leggi, nungi def éducation religieuse. Parce que xale yi, danu am deux heures par semaine: une heure Arabe, langue bi. Nu def matière yi: lecture, écriture, dictée, ainsi de suite. L'autre, nu def éducation religieuse. Comme ça, xalé yi mu xam au moins diné am.* / Yes. But it wasn't part [of the curriculum]. But me, why I used to do it, I said to myself, "the fact that the children are learning Arabic, I should take advantage to teach them their religion also at school." Yes. Because at that time, at the school they would say that "children can do grammar, recitations, do songs." But recitations, songs, as the children were already doing that in French, I replaced it with another religious subject, either, what the Prophet said, may he rest in peace, or the Quoran, write it out for them. Or sometimes, a discussion about religion... But after a while a service notice came out, with what? That we should teach religious education. Yes. For my part, what I remember, when I came to this school in 82/83 up until now, we were doing religious education. Because the kids, they have two hours per week. One hour Arabic, the language. We do various subjects: reading, writing, dictation, etc. The other, we do religious education. That way, the kids know at least their religion. (Madame Diagne, Arabic teacher, Interview)

This quote shows how Madame Diagne makes an undeniable connection between language and religion, propelling her to infuse her lessons with religious instruction. At the same time, this teacher admits some discomfort and sense of risk about teaching religious instruction prior to the official mandate. She recounted that she would tell students that she was teaching them about their religion because it was important and that way even "*tey ji ba inspecteur bi ñowoon ngeen menn gérer seen bopp* / today, if the inspector comes, you'll be able to take care of yourselves" (Madame Diagne, Arabic

teacher, Interview). Madame Diagne's clearly felt it was her duty to share religious teachings even if it was outside of the prescribed official curriculum. This further shows how learning content may be flexible and invite cultural references. At the same time, such openness may otherwise indicate a lack of enforcement on the part of the school administration or larger educational system.

Parental Response

Lastly, I will briefly explore parents' responses to religious instruction, largely conveyed through our discussion with Madame Diagne (Arabic teacher), as well as through interviews with parents. Overwhelmingly, it seems that parents are pleased with the instruction. Madame Diagne noted several instances of parents being appreciative that their children were learning how to improve their Muslim practices at school (Interview). At the same time, one parent, Yaay Adama's father, insisted that one hour of religious instruction a week was not enough. He continues to pay for private Quoranic lessons for his children (Interview).

While it seems that parents may generally support the Arabic language and religious education class at the school, I would be remiss if I did not further complicate Muslim identity within the particular context of this predominantly Lebou town. In our discussion with Madame Diagne (Arabic teacher), she indicated that in the beginning of her time at the school many of the parents were *ceddos* (non-believers). As such, they did not regularly instruct their children in Islamic practices (Interview). This being the case, Madame Diagne's insistence of teaching students about their religion may support a larger Senegalese context, but conflict with Lebou sensibilities. On the other hand, this

comment may either no longer be relevant or apply to a very small sub-group that was not at all reflected in this study's findings. For example, Yaay Adama's father is Lebou but rejects many typically Lebou practices, such as the *ndeup* healing ritual. Similarly, Madame Sarr (3rd grade teacher) is of Lebou origin, having grown up in the neighboring town. In Chapter 8, she provides examples of how she passes on Muslim values through her teaching. Regardless, religious fervor and devotion vary among individuals and provides a reminder of the complexity of culture and promoting culturally relevant instruction. Such possible dissonance also provides another example of the myriad layers of cultures, values, and practices that make up Senegalese society.

To summarize, the school that served as the site for this study has been providing religious instruction to students well before it was officially mandated across the country in 2002. In many ways, the Arabic language and religion class provides the quintessential example of cultural relevancy. Not only do Arabic teachers alternate between Wolof and Arabic in their lessons, but they reinforce religious teachings that are generally supported by parents. In fact, it is likely that popular support was one of the factors leading to the official mandate of religious instruction within the curriculum. Although the Arabic language and religion class occupies only two hours of students' time throughout the weak, its inclusion significantly demonstrates how learning content may be adapted to better fit the needs of learners and their communities.

In this section, I have provided evidence of how certain subjects within the primary school curriculum as implemented at this research site directly address and accentuate local values, sensibilities, and realities. Subjects that lend themselves to this sort of cultural inclusion are the arts, history, geography, *Vivre dans son milieu, Vivre*

ensemble, and the Arabic language and religious instruction class. All of these subjects provide opportunities for cultural relevancy and stand as counter-examples for much of the literature on African education that claim it as alienating. *Vivre dans son milieu* and *Vivre ensemble* merit particular discussion because they are encapsulated within the new *Curriculum* as development-related subjects. Brock-Utne (2000) argues that school content targeting development efforts responds to a foreign agenda and often takes away from other more local content areas. While this is an understandable concern, in the example of this present school, alongside with religious instruction, these development subjects provide perhaps the greatest platforms for integrating cultures within schooling.

Subjects Less Favorable to Integrating Cultural References

While the above subjects provide teachers the opportunity to make cultural references the focus of their lesson, other subjects employ cultural references more peripherally. Connections to students' lived experiences and cultural references serve to provide contexts for students to understand the material presented. Oftentimes this material is Western in nature. Specifically, subjects that are less favorable to integrating cultural references include French, math, and science. I will explore each of these subjects in the following paragraphs.

French

As indicated above, teachers spend a large amount of instructional time delivering French language lessons and emphasizing oral and written communication skills. The new Curriculum has introduced a capacities approach that utilizes texts as the central

point of delivery for French lessons. I explored earlier how texts often provide excellent platforms for bringing in cultural references within the classroom and bridging to students' experiences. In addition to comprehension exercises, teachers also now draw upon texts to deliver vocabulary and conjugation lessons. While both are essentially based in the French language, I will show below that teachers still make references to student-near objects, activities, and cultural experiences in order to enhance students' understanding. While the French language remains the focus of the activity, cultural references enhance the lesson by bringing lessons closer to students' frames of reference.

To begin with, French vocabulary exercises illustrate a relative amount of inclusion of cultural references. When I observed Madame Diouf's fourth-grade class, for instance, as they explored the text, "*Le choc des titans* / The Clash of the Titans," she made regular references to local Senegalese wrestlers in trying to describe the various vocabulary words such as "titans." In doing so, she made students laugh repeatedly, and many seemed to follow along with the lesson. I noticed teachers' use of cultural references during vocabulary lessons in other classrooms as well. Here, I present a detailed example from Monsieur Diouf's sixth grade class. I present this example to illustrate how even in the highest primary school grade, and in which, students are preparing to take upcoming exams (*Entrée en 6ième* - Middle School Entrance Exam - and the *Certificate de Fin d'études élémentaires (CFEE)* - End of Elementary Studies Certificate), that the teacher still makes reference to students' cultures and lived experience. This fieldnotes excerpt is from a lesson about the word *quête* (money collection). The teacher provides three examples that are culturally relevant to this current population in order to solidify student understanding:

> "*Pour achever la construction de la mosquée, les vieux font une quête.* / To complete the construction of the mosque, the older people take up a collection." The teacher makes the comment, "*c'est une belle phrase qui touche à la réalité* / it's a beautiful sentence that touches upon reality." The teacher continues, on *Tabaski/Korite* [Eid Al Fitr/Eid Al Adha], *"au lieu de faire la quête, qu'est-ce que vous faites? Le lewin* [Wolof]. All the students knew the word. The teacher said that the students collect it and put in in their pocket. "*Actuellement,*" he says, "*c'est le Gammu. Les Tijaans se rendent dans les maisons pour demander la quête*. / Currently, it's the *Gammu*. *Tijaans* go house to house doing a collection." (He repeats this example in Wolof). (Fieldnotes)

This excerpt from a vocabulary lesson related to the text, "*La chasse à la plage* / The Hunt at the Beach," demonstrates how the teacher brings in important cultural references, such as the two most important Muslim holidays and the practice of *lewin*, in order to facilitate student understanding of new vocabulary words. As is evident from the end of the excerpt, Monsieur Diouf even employs Wolof in order to help his lesson. This is particularly significant because it is a 6th grade and exam year classroom. While I observed much more Wolof being spoken in other classrooms, this excerpt also provides a further example of Monsieur Diouf utilizing Wolof as a pedagogical support, building on the related discussion in Chapter 6.

Secondly, while the bulk of conjugation lessons tend to be dry drill exercises with little contextualization, nonetheless, teachers tend to conclude conjugation lessons with practice exercises that draw upon various elements familiar to students. References may connect to students' lives outside of school as well as within the school setting. To illustrate, here is an example of conjugation exercises, also from Monsieur Diouf's 6th grade class:

> *Fatou (manger) _____le repas. Tu (avoir) _____de bonnes notes. Nous (jouer) _____ au football. Amadou et Ousmane (être) ____ à la foire.* / Fatou (to eat) _____ the meal. You (to have) _____ good grades. We (to play) _____ soccert. Amadou and Ousmane (to be) _____ at the fair. (Fieldnotes)

In addition to using typical Senegalese names (Fatou, Amadou, and Ousmane), this above exercise demonstrates basic cultural relevancy in making reference to activities and objects with which students may engage and/or use on a regular basis. Examples relate to eating, doing well in school, playing soccer, and going to the fair. This last reference of the fair likely refers to the international fair that takes place in Dakar annually. Including such local references may improve student participation as well as understanding.

Science

While in my observations and discussions with teachers, science does not directly capture Senegalese cultures or Indigenous knowledges, it is another subject area that draws upon them as pedagogical supports. In the Senegalese primary school curriculum, science is taught within the larger heading, *Initiation scientifique et téchnique* (IST). Although one teacher indicated that she still finds it useful to use cultural references to bridge to IST lessons - "*ça facilite la leçon à venir* / it facilitates that lesson's delivery" (Madame Ndoye, 2nd grade, Interview) - the actual subject matter of lessons remains largely grounded in Western science. An example is an IST lesson that I observed in Monsieur Diouf's 6th grade class on combustibles. It was a dynamic lesson, in which, at its culmination, students were out of their seats crowding around the teacher as he demonstrated how liquid combustibles react when poured into water. Monsieur Diouf began the lesson by presenting an unlabeled bottle of flammable liquid to students. He then circulated through the classroom asking students to sniff and identify the liquid. Eventually, he disclosed that the liquid was kerosene, and he proceeded to talk about kerosene's availability at local boutiques. As the lesson developed, he spoke about other

combustibles as well as ways to put out fires, referring to local firefighters and the school courtyard as an example. While Monsieur Diouf made an effort to substantiate the lesson with references familiar to students, the main message of the lesson, theories of categorization of combustibles and their qualities, relies upon Western science rather than local cultural knowledge.

Similarly, the example I presented above in the Chapter 6 section on *les enquêtes* from Monsieur Diallo's fifth-grade class on soil types is another illustration of how local knowledge can aid teachers and students in accessing Western science concepts. As this instance demonstrates, however, the local or Indigenous knowledges that students identify in conducting the *enquête* are then reformulated by the teacher to showcase Western science. As Monsieur Diallo has explained, once students have brought in their information, he "validates" it according to the lesson at hand and then uses it in his summary (Interview). This synthesized information will later be assessed while the original cultural concepts simply serve as entry points and are not further developed or discussed as pieces of knowledge in themselves within the classroom.

Math

Even more so than French and science, math seems to a subject that is quite distant from cultural realities. Many of the lessons I attended focused entirely on mathematical calculations without any context. Such examples would include drilling exercises as well as other problems like choosing the largest fraction of a series or doing division problems and finding a remainder. Yet, even here, there are occasions that teachers reference students' realities and cultural knowledge in order to improve student

comprehension. For instance, Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher) seemed to use Wolof most when teaching math. I conjectured that he was most passionate about math and that his exuberance translated into more code-switching than in other subject areas. Interestingly enough, the RTI (2010) study also found that math was the subject area where teachers also tended to use Wolof. In addition, word problems provide a clear example of opportunities for cultural relevancy. Prior to the field research period, a conversation with my research associate revealed that in the past, references, like names, may have been more Eurocentric, thereby evidencing a trend towards increased cultural relevancy (Phone conversation). To illustrate, I include four exercises from various lessons observed in Monsieur Diouf's sixth-grade class:

> *Un cahier, un livre et un sac coûtent ensemble 5000 F. Le cahier vaut 850 F moins que le livre et le livre coute 1200 F de moins que le sac. Consigne: Calcule le prix de chaque article.* / A notebook, a book and a bag together cost 5000F. The notebook costs 850 F less than the book and the book costs 1200 F less than the bag. Instructions: Calculate the price of each item. (Fieldnotes)
>
> *Abdou a 14 billes. Son ami, Moussa, a 6 billes de plus que lui. Combien de billes à Moussa?* / Abdou has 14 marbles. His friend, Moussa, has 6 more marbles than him. How many marbles does Moussa have? (Fieldnotes)
>
> *Un paysan mesure un champ au pas. Il en fais 420 en parcourant le périmètre. Sachant que la longueur d'un pas mesure 75 cm. Calcule par ce paysan les dimensions du champ si la longueur mesure 37.5 m de plus que la largeur.* / A farmer measures a field by foot. He makes 420 steps in walking around the perimeter. The length of one step measures 75 cm. Calculate for this farmer the dimensions of the field is the length is 37.5 m longer than the width. (Fieldnotes)
>
> *Un panier contient 150 mangues. On vend 1/5 puis un tiers. Combien de mangues ont été vendues en total ? Quelle quantité de mangues reste-t-il dans le panier?* / A basket contains 150 mangoes. You sell 1/5 then a third. How many mangoes have been sold in total? What quantity of mangoes is left in the basket? (Fieldnotes)
>
> Word problems, like these exercises above, include references both to objects

within students' homes and communities (marbles, fields, mangoes, chickens, money, etc.) and school objects (backpacks, tables, pencils, pens, students, etc.). Without having performed a detailed quantitative analysis during the research period, my sense is that teachers may refer more often to the latter, school objects, when delivering a math lesson. While this is also an example of cultural relevancy as everyone within the classroom shares these experiences, it is one that is fabricated within the schooling environment itself. In this sense, these examples are more synthetic and do not provide opportunities to connect to students' lives outside of the school grounds. Were teachers to limit themselves to only school examples, they would surely create an environment that is disconnected and alienating, i.e., an environment similar to that so criticized in the literature.

Measurement represents another set of math-related lessons that utilizes cultural references in order to improve understanding of Western concepts, such as the metric system. Moreover, Monsieur Ba led a lesson with his 5th grade class about liquid measurements, in which he began with examples of measurements used within the home. Below is an excerpt from my fieldnotes (the longer version of the quote presented at the beginning of this chapter):

> Teacher speaks in Wolof and then in French, *"Maman ne prend pas l'huile et verser ça directement dans la marmite* / Mother doesn't take the oil and pour it directly in the pot?" He asks in Wolof if Mother goes and just gets the big bottle of oil that Father buys and just pours it in (makes gesture). Students loudly say "*Non / No*!" Many are standing up, out of their seats.
>
> Teacher: *On doit faire quoi* / What should we do?
>
> Students: *Mesurer* / Measure!
>
> Teacher: *Donc, quand Maman fait la cuisine elle ne prend pas l'huile et verser ça*

directement dans la marmite. Elle doit mésurer. Donc, nous aussi, aujourd'hui, on va essayer de mesurer. Bien, mais est-ce que quand Maman cuisine, elle mésure n'importe comment? Est-ce que quand Maman est en train de cuisiner, par exemple, deux kilos de riz, est-ce qu'elle a besoin de quatres kilos de riz?" / So, when Mother cooks, she doesn't just take the oil and pour it directly in the pot. She must measure. So, us too, today, we are going to try to measure. Well, but when Mother cooks, does she just measure any which way? When Mother cooks, for example, two kilograms of rice, does she need four kilograms of rice?

Students: *Non!* / No!

Notwithstanding, the actual focus of the math lesson reflects Western-derived concepts. Math lessons I observed did not explore more locally based numerical conceptions. While surely knowing the metric system is useful to all students, I wonder if there are not local conceptions of measurement that might also be relevant. Similarly, it might be possible to explore how the Wolof language and perhaps local mental configurations utilize a base-10 system for counting (twenty is *ñaar fukk* or "two ten") and a base-5 system for calculating money. For instance, a 25F coin is referred to as *juroomi derem* (literally 5 times *'derem'* or 5F piece). This sort of locally based logic is not at all activated or drawn upon during math lessons and stands as an area for possible greater cultural integration. Surely, in a community that has historically been composed of fishermen, there may exist other examples of counting, measuring, or calculating that might relate to numeracy skills targeted within the primary school curriculum. This is an area for possible growth, and one that has been fairly successful for other communities in their efforts in incorporating Indigenous knowledges within schooling (see Lipka et al., 2009; Chikodzi & Nyota, 2010).

Summary

While French, math, and science-related subjects include references to students' lives and experiences, they use them as auxiliary pedagogical supports rather than seeking to access and explore a deeper knowledge or logic. This is a different approach from the *vivre ensemble* lesson, for example, which acknowledges and reaches deeply into cultural sensibilities regarding family and hierarchy. As discussed above, many teachers I interviewed indicated feeling a moral obligation to teach such lessons and found them to be valuable in themselves, not necessarily for the purpose of mastering a skill. Moreover, my research shows through discussions with school personnel and participant observation that no subject is entirely void of cultural references. This finding contradicts much of the literature's focus on African education as disconnected and alienating. However, there is also evidence that some subjects lend themselves more easily to integrating cultural references than others. As I have shown here, teachers frequently make cultural connections in their delivery of history, geography, *vivre dans son milieu* and *vivre ensemble* lessons. Local and cultural references serve more meager supporting roles with other subjects, such as French, math, and science. Still, my research demonstrates that, even for these subject areas, teachers utilize cultural references to provide context and help facilitate the targeted content of the lesson. Keep in mind that teachers devote significantly more time to French and math than they do to other subjects, grouped together as *les éveils* (IST, history, geography, *vivre ensemble,* and *vivre dans son milieu*. Using history as an example, I also identified areas in which current teaching may become even more culturally relevant: by closely examining underlying assumptions and strengthening a critical approach to material. In the next chapter, I similarly closely

examine how teachers view their roles in relation to cultural relevancy, presenting examples where teachers support local culture, as well as where they challenge local views and practices.

CHAPTER 8

ROLE OF TEACHERS IN CULTURAL RELEVANCY

> *C'est le devoir le plus absolu de l'enseignant! /* It's a teacher's most basic task!
> (Madame Sy, Veteran floating teacher, 2nd interview).

> *J'en avais parlé avec la maman et je lui ai dit que "ça c'est un crime. Déjà, biologiquement, elle n'est pas prête." En faite, c'est le problème de nos parents Peuhls. Sont les mariages précoces là-bas. On donne très tôt les filles. /* I had spoken with the mother and I said to her, "it's a crime. Already, she's not ready biologically." Really, that's the problem with our Pulaar relatives. For them, it's all about early marriages. They give away their daughters very early.
> (Madame Ka, 6th grade, Interview)

In order for teachers to include cultural references in their lessons, they must first be familiar with the community and its culture. As might be expected, some participants emphasized that becoming familiar with local realities is another aspect of the good pedagogy that I explored above in chapter 6. As one teacher stated, "*c'est le devoir le plus absolu de l'enseignant! /* it's a teacher's most basic task!" (Madame Sy, Veteran floating teacher, 2nd interview). Gaining familiarity with the cultures of the community in which a teacher works is particularly important in settings where teachers may not be from the area or from the majority ethnic group represented at school. Such is the case for almost all of the teaching personnel at this school. Of the twelve individuals (school director, 10 general education teachers, one Arabic language teacher) that I spoke with, only one identifies as being Lebou, Madame Sarr. Even so, she did not grow up in the town although she has since married into the neighboring Lebou community. A number of participants, including the school director, addressed the importance of doing research in order to learn about local realities. None of them were as emphatic as Madame Sy, however:

> *Un citoyen de Dakar - il fait sa formation, qu'on l'envoi en, par exemple, à Tambacounda. C'est sûr qu'il ne connaît pas les réalités, mais il vient - il est tenu - si non, s'il fait pas le travail, il fait "abandonne de poste." Il perd son truc. Donc, il est tenu de... Maintenant, quand tu es dans le milieu - avant de pouvoir enseigner, déjà, il faut d'abord contacter les veilles personnes, les vieillards. Maintenant, à partir d'entretiens que tu as eu avec la population, ils peuvent vous donner beaucoup de choses. C'est toi - tu es tenu! - de faire des investigations sur le milieu pour qu'au moins, faire ton travail correctement. Tu peux pas venir, dire, "je suis là. Je commence à dispenser des enseignements..." sans connaître le milieu des enfants, d'où t'ils viennent. Leurs réactions. Leurs passés. Il faut d'abord - il faut d'abord un travail d'approche. Que tu connaisses le terrain. Il faut faire un état de lieu pour pouvoir maintenant dispenser. Si non, ça marche pas. /* A citizen from Dakar - he does his training and then he is sent, for example, to Tambacounda [the largest city and region in the most eastern part of Senegal]. Surely he won't be familiar with the local realities, but he comes - he has to - if not, if he doesn't do the work, he commits "abandonment of assignment." He loses his thing. So, he has to... Now, when you are in the environment - before being able to teach, already, you have to first contact older people, the old folks. Now, based on interviews that you had with the population, they can give you a lot of things. It's up to you - you have to! - to do investigations about the area in order to at least do your work correctly. You can't just come and say, "I'm here. I'm going to start to lecture..." without being familiar with the children's environment, where they are from. Their reactions. Their history. You must - you must begin with some first contact exercises. That you get to know the terrain. You have to first do an assessment in order to be able to teach your classes. If not, it doesn't work. (Madame Sy, Veteran floating teacher, 2nd Interview)

Madame Sy's commentaries, in general, carry particular weight. She is a veteran teacher who is well-respected by her colleagues for her rigor. She also previously taught in a more rural location prior to coming to this town to join her husband who had already been a teacher there for some time. The above quote is a testimony to what she sees as good teaching practice while also reflecting what she herself has done as a teacher at her two distinct postings. Additionally, Madame Sy is from an older generation of teachers, having begun teaching in 1985. Her comments, then, seem to demonstrate that familiarity with the milieu of the school has been part of teachers' mandate for quite some time. As

she describes, being familiar with local cultures and the realities that affect students and the school community allows her to better serve them as a teacher.

Furthermore, Madame Sy also made the connection between cultures and how students react in her classroom. In the passage below, she described at length how she needs to be familiar with students' backgrounds in order to help them learn the material.

> *...Les enfants que nous recevons, on pourrait pas dire qu'il n'y a pas la culture à l'école parce que chaque élève vient avec sa culture...dans les régions - moi j'ai fait six ans à Fatick. Et dans les régions, là ça se sent, ça se sent - que les enfants ont leur culture. Même en déroulant ta leçon, par rapport aux réponses des questions, tu sens que l'enfant ne peut répondre que par rapport à ce qu'il vit, dans sa société... Tel...est Sereer, peut-être c'est comme ça que ça pratique chez eux. Quand il vient en classe, il reproduit ça. Maintenant, c'est au maître, maintenant, de pouvoir uniformiser les canaux de compréhension. /* ...The students that we receive, you can't say that there isn't culture at school because every student comes with his/her culture...in the regions - me, I did six years in Fatick [town in the interior of Senegal]. And in the regions, there you really feel it, you can feel it - that children have their culture. Even as you implement your lesson, in regards to the answers you receive to your questions, you feel that children can only respond according to what they live within their society... This one...is Sereer - maybe that's how they practice it. When he comes to class, he reproduces that. Now, it's up to the teacher to be able to help students understand in the same way. (Madame Sy, Veteran floating teacher, 1st Interview)

Moreover, Madame Sy explains how sometimes knowing that students have different cultural backgrounds may translate into different approaches for different students, a topic that is fairly controversial in the literature on cultural relevance and social justice. Again, being able to distinguish different cultural realities, values, and beliefs requires a certain awareness on the part of the teachers.

Now, once teachers are aware of local cultures, what do they do with this new knowledge? I turn to this question in the subsequent sections of this chapter. Earlier chapters showed how the new *Curriculum* and certain subjects foster cultural relevancy. Recall that this present chapter concentrates on the role of teachers and their perceptions

of how they might support or challenge local realities, cultural practices, and Indigenous knowledges beyond routine lessons. The first part of this chapter highlights ways in which teachers embed culture in their teachings and dealings with students. The cultures they reinforce may reflect the particular culture of the locality or a larger shared culture that teachers feel they have in common with students - either the composite Senegalese culture, or even a Muslim identity. The second section of this chapter focuses on ways that teachers do just the opposite - how they stand against cultures and propose alternative understandings and ways of doing things. This includes their interactions with students within the classroom as well as efforts that teachers make to intervene within students' homes and the community at large.

Supporting and Encouraging Cultures

Throughout my interactions with research participants, we discussed a number of ways in which cultures may be present within the school grounds and within their work as educators. In the sections below, I explore teacher perspectives of how they may support local cultures and Indigenous knowledges. In the first instance, teachers use their prominent position to reinforce morals and good behavior that are also espoused within a common Senegalese culture. In the second sub-section, I delve further into the issue of how teachers may play a role in reinforcing Muslim education.

Inculcating Morals and Good Behavior

Some participants expressed that they deliberately include and address Senegalese culture within their lessons in order to reinforce values, morals, and rules of good

behavior. A fairly common refrain in my discussions with teachers was the concept of students as blank slates (stated by some teachers as "tabula rasa"), that is, that children come to school with an empty mind and that it is the teacher's duty to provide them with information. Such comments may suggest that children have learned nothing of value prior to coming to school, and therefore, it was a teacher's duty to indoctrinate them in the ways of society. One teacher, Madame Diallo (3rd grade teacher), went so far as stating that, prior to coming to school, children in the community are almost like crazy people ("*presque des fous")* (Interview). Another teacher, Monsieur Ndiaye (1st grade teacher), described the situation in the following way:

> *Par rapport à CI, sont des élèves qui viennent têtes vides comme ça et c'est à vous de les inculcer les valeurs morales, les valeurs traditionnelles et autres... Donc, de nekk lo xamante ni lu bess ci yo. Yo yaay li menn joox le goût des études. Yo yaay lenn menn devier dans leur vie parce que bu ñowe xale bi xamugul dara, dara, dara.* / In regards to first grade, they are students who come as empty heads and it's up to you to inculcate them with moral values, traditional values and others...So, they are you know, like new for you. You are the one who can give them a taste for studying. You are the one who can help divert them in their lives because, you know, children know nothing, nothing, nothing. (Interview)

This passage illustrates an understanding that I found to be common among other colleagues as well - that is, that teachers have a role to play in providing students with much of the knowledge that they need. According to participants, this knowledge may be academic, moral, and even traditional in nature. In some ways, such a statement complicates previous passages that underline the importance of knowing local cultures and realities. After all, why would it be important to learn local realities if teachers deem them to be of little value and if they imagine that students are coming to them as blank slates, having learned nothing of value? Clearly, a complex notion, which points to multiple truths and understandings, none of which are necessarily mutually exclusive.

Furthermore, this concept that students come to school with no previous knowledge serves to inflate the role of the teacher and, in this way, is self-gratifying for public school educators. As one teacher stated during a break-time conversation with others, transforming a blank slate into a successful student, "*ça fait notre fierté comme ensignante* / that's our source of pride as teachers" (Madame Ndoye, Fieldnotes).

Teachers also provided various rationales for why they felt that students were lacking in good manners - even traditional values and cultural understandings - before coming to school, typically at age seven. Most notably, due largely to economic constraints, parents no longer have the time to sit with children and discuss values. Many parents leave the house very early looking for resources. Galanga (2005) made a similar assertion when writing on teacher's attitudes towards Indigenous knowledges in the classroom in Kenya. In his report, he wrote how teachers note that parents are no longer able to pass on traditions to their children. Rather than categorizing parents as lazy or incognizant of the importance of inter-generational cultural transmission, we must acknowledge the socio-economic difficulties parents face and how this compounds such transmission. Perhaps another issue may also be the cessation of initiation rites, a frequently cited component of Indigenous knowledges. While two participants (Madame Diouf and Ndeye Aicha's father) mentioned initiation rites in their home villages during our discussions, there was no mention of particularly Lebou rites in my interactions with participants. Furthermore, Madame Diouf and Ndeye Aicha's father seemed to imply that their children will likely no longer participate in these rights now that they are living in a more urban environment.

Perhaps more controversial, one teacher reasoned that she needs to teach students

cultural values because Lebou people are often very crude and ill-mannered by nature (Madame Diallo, Fieldnotes). Interestingly enough, this is also a characteristic that was cited in a 1952 ethnography of the Lebou people (XXXX)[18]. The authors noted that such a characteristic reflects a more expanded conception of family life where the nuclear family may share childrearing responsibilities with many other individuals, as well as the conception of the relationship between parents and children. Regardless of the verity of this observation, my research demonstrates that teachers believe that young people may not have access to learning such values outside of school. In this respect, the school may become the guardian of local knowledge in the face of poverty and other conditions.

In addition to teachers calling upon values within their teaching out of moral obligation, some teachers also explained that it has pedagogical value. For example, Madame Diallo made a strong statement that she sees using local references as a way of reaching students and, moreover, making an impact on their lives. She also sees her role as one of "educating" children, a word also utilized by Madame Sarr and Madame Sy. Madame Diallo clarified the distinction between *enseignement* (teaching) and *éducation* (education/manners). Here, her reference to *education* refers to a transfer of knowledge about values and morals, in a phrase, *savoir vivre.* To illustrate Madame Diallo's understanding of the role of cultures in her classroom and her responsibilities towards her students, I include the following passage:

> *En générale, ici, on recopiait les Français, mais avec le Curriculum, on commence un peu à intégré les réalités du milieu. C'est pourquoi, quand j'enseigne, j'éduque. Comme moi, moi je suis une enseignante un peu rebelle. Pour enseigner, j'essaye d'intégrer le maximum la culture sénégalaise. Parce qu'on ne peut pas apprendre ce qui est à l'extérieur. Ca ne nous intéresse pas. On*

[18] Some references have been masked to protect identities.

> *aura pas - on peut - ça pourrait - peut être...on n'aurait pas l'occasion de vivre ça. Donc, il vaut mieux apprécier ce qui vient de chez nous. Par exemple, ici, en leçon d'histoire, nous avons l'arbre généalogique. Vous avez entendu que tantôt, je parlais de griot. Ici, la leçon d'histoire, par exemple, moi en imprégnation, surtout dans les grandes classes, j'utilise généralement le Wolof. En histoire. /* In general, here, we used to copy the French, but with the *Curriculum*, we have started to integrate local realities a bit. It's why, when I teach, I educate. Me, for example, I'm a bit of a rebel teacher. To teach, I try to integrate Senegalese culture as much as possible. Because we can't learn what is outside of Senegal. That doesn't interest us. We won't - we can - it might - maybe...we won't have the opportunity to experience that. So, it's better to appreciate what comes from here. For example, here, in my history lesson, we have the family tree. You heard earlier that I was talking about the griot. Here, in history lessons, for example, me in *impregnation*, especially in the older classes, I generally use Wolof...in history. *(3rd grade teacher, Interview)*

Not only does this commentary attest to Madame Diallo's vision of her role, but she also responds directly to some of the criticisms made within the literature about African systems of education being replicas of European systems. She further rebukes the Senghorian notion discussed above that schooling should prepare young Africans to open up to the rest of the world. Rather, she seems to understand the role of education as helping young people to understand and appreciate where they are. As she states, "maybe... we won't have the opportunity to experience that," seemingly referring to the many Senegalese who emigrate. When I asked for clarification as to the reason she chose to use the example of the griot with students and whether or not that was part of the lesson in the *Curriculum*, she answered:

> *Mais, pour qu'ils comprennent! Chaque - tous les élèves ici savent ce qui c'est un griot. Et ils savent comment ils procèdent. Genre, tu viens dans un baptême, le griot te parle de tes parents, de tes grands-parents et de tes aïeux. Pour connaître ça, c'est ça qui fait appelle à l'arbre généalogique. C'est pour quoi je leur ai parlé de ça. Un exemple plus précis - pour apporter beaucoup plus de précision, j'ai utiliser le griot. /* So that they can understand! Every - all of the students here know what a griot is. And they know how they proceed. Like, you come to a baptism and the griot talks about your parents, your grand parents and your ancestors. To know that, that's what they call a family tree. It's why I spoke to

> them about that. A more precise example - to be much more precise, I use the griot. *(Interview)*

The griot also represents an example of Indigenous knowledges that is shared among many ethnic groups in Senegal. Oral history, oratory skills, and family connections are all highly regarded by many groups. As Madame Diallo intimated earlier, it is not an example of copying French practice.

In order to even better understand what teachers might be referring to when they mentioned teaching values and good behaviors to students, I pressed the question with teachers. One of the areas of culture that some teachers affirmed as being present is gender roles. For example, when I asked Madame Diouf directly for examples of local knowledge in the way she teaches, she answered:

> *C'est integré parce qu'il y a des choses qu'on interdit aux filles et on les accordent aux garçons. Ca aussi, ça fait parti du savoir local. Ce que je pense...Comme quoi? On dit qu'une fille ne doit pas faire quoi?... Une jeune fille...une fille ne doit pas se battre avec les garçons. Comme ça. Parce que le garçon est plus fort que lui et peut lui blesser ou bien, peut lui faire quelque chose eh...des méchancité. Affaires yo yu daal.* / It's integrated because there are certain things that we prohibit for girls and allow for boys. That too, that is part of local knowledge. It's what I think...Like what? We say that a girl shouldn't do what...? a girl...a girl shouldn't fight with boys. Like that. Because boys are stronger that her and can hurt her or even, can do something to her, mean things. Things like that. (Madame Diouf, 4th grade teacher, Interview)

Another example of how teachers use culture to reinforce morals is in order to highlight good manners. For example, Madame Sarr associates including culture in lessons with teaching students good manners. When I asked her if culture is present at school, she explains:

> *On les éduque. On les apprend les bonnes manières, la culture, tout ça. Donc, des fois, il y a même des leçons, où on apprend la culture de notre pays. Donc, ça sera l'occasion de leur rappeler leur culture. "Qu'est-ce qu'on doit faire? Qu'est-ce qu...on doit faire ça." Mais, nous, chaque jour, on les rappelle ce qu'il doivent faire: un garçon doit faire ça, une fille ne peut pas faire ça. Et...pour qu'ils*

> *sachent leur culture, d'où ils viennent. C'est ça. Nous, on les apprend ici ça.* / We educate them. We teach them good manners, culture, all that. So, sometimes, there are even lessons where we teach about the culture of our country. So, that is an opportunity to remind students about their culture, "What should we do? What is...we should do this." But, us, everyday, we remind them what they should do: a boy should do this, a girl should not do this. And...so that they are aware of their culture, where they come from. That's how it is. Us, we teach them that here. (Interview)

Madame Sarr provided examples of what these good habits might be, for instance, the importance of greeting older people, or waiting for people to finish speaking rather than interrupting. Another example is how, when at home, a child is sent to bring water to someone older, then the child should remain next to the person until they have finished. They then take the cup and leave. Adding to this list, other teachers reiterated the importance of handshakes in society, and respect for elders (especially not insulting them), honesty, sincerity, self-respect, and good hygiene habits, as well avoiding accusations of lying. Many of these examples resonated with examples provided by parents during interviews as well, supporting the notion that these are indeed cultural values that are being supported and reinforced by teachers within the school environment.

Reinforcing Muslim Education

In discussions with teachers, many described how they also aim to inculcate children with notions of how to be a member of a community and a good citizen. As the school does not claim to be representative of the various ethnic communities from which students originate, this might be understood as the individuals who live in the geographic region surrounding the school. Most interestingly, in support of this larger community, many teachers explained that they use their roles to emphasize the importance of being good family members and Muslims. I devote this present section to this important aspect

of identity: teaching students how to be good Muslims. While it might be expected that Madame Diagne, the Arabic language and religion teacher, would speak at great length about how the school's teaching supports Muslim education, other teachers also agreed that they have a duty to uphold religious teaching within the classroom. As an illustration, Madame Sarr (3rd grade teacher) explained that she often conveys to students what a "good Muslim" (*"un bon musulman"*) should do (Interview). Similarly, when discussing the role of religion within the school, Madame Sy stated:

> *Ca doit être présent même. Parce que c'est l'éducation - c'est l'éducation dans tout. Il y a des maîtres qui sont chargé de ce volet-là. Mais nous, en tant que musulmans, tu abordes les élèves par fois pour venir en appui à cette éducation religieuse. /* It should be especially present. Because it's education - it's education about everything. There are teachers who are responsible for that subject. But us, in terms of being Muslim, you sometimes approach students in a way that supports this religious education. (Veteran floating teacher, Interview)

The observation that some teachers purposely discuss and emphasize Muslim teachings within their general education classrooms provides another layer of understanding of what "culture" may mean within these classrooms, school, community, and even society at large. This is particularly significant since, according to the school director, public schooling is meant to be non-religious (1st Interview). In addition to family, ethnic group, etc. students ascribe to religious cultures, and notably in this town, a Muslim identity. In many ways, the Muslim culture may be a more encompassing identity than that of ethnicity or even language. It provides another example of the myriad layers of values and practices that are common to many people within Senegalese society and reinforces the salience of a postmodern pluralistic lens for this study.

Challenging Local Cultures

Although the above section provides examples of how teachers approach their work in ways that reinforce and accompany what students may learn within their families and the greater community, other examples complicate these observations. That is, teachers use their position of power (knowingly or otherwise) to question and often challenge the validity of local practices. In certain cases, this may have the effect of degrading certain cultural elements and aspects of Indigenous knowledges in the eyes of the students. In this manner, teachers act as knowledge gatekeepers and their classrooms become incubators for individuals who, as a result of being in school, may look upon their culture and their parents differently. These examples do indeed align quite well with the arguments in the literature that schooling can be alienating. My findings reveal that many participating teachers advocate against practices when they find them to be either 1) disruptive to education in general, or 2) in contention with issues that I have categorized as development topics. Their interdictions against certain practices occur on the school grounds but also extend outside of the school's main gates into children's homes, as I discuss below. Such examples bring into focus how values may be articulated differently within and outside of the school gate and provide an illustration of some of the tensions that students encounter and hopefully decipher as they move through their elementary school careers.

Teachers Challenge Culture as Disruptive to Education

One of the motivations for teachers to criticize or counter widely-held cultural practices may be their perceived lack of congruence with children's formal education. In

this section, I explore two examples in which teachers name a conflict between the school and local practices. Both examples happen to be religious in nature. The first illustration relates to how my first full week of fieldwork coincided with the *Gammu*, the celebration of the birthday of Prophet Mohammed, and a pilgrimage to Tivaouane, the holy city of the Tijaaniya brotherhood. I learned that much of the town's population professed membership in this brotherhood and, as a result, while the *Gammu* technically fell on Wednesday, a declared government holiday, the school was closed Tuesday thru Friday. While there were teachers who took advantage of the extended holiday and had even asked for formal permission to miss school on the non-official days, others were bothered by students' absences and found it to be indicative of either overzealous religious fervor or a lack of dedication on the part of students. Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher), whose wife and daughter traveled to Tivaouane and stayed there for at least a week beyond the official *Gammu*, demonstrated irritation the Monday prior to the holiday. While students were copying from the board, he came back to where I was sitting in his class and explained how parents decide that students will miss class. He further expressed frustration that parents are "running the school." He explained that there were two buses sent from Tivaouane to bring community members to the pilgrimage. To emphasize his point, he asked students for a show of hands of those who would be going to the *Gammu*. Six students raised their hands. He then commented that students technically require permission from the school to be absent (Fieldnotes). Still, the following week when classes resumed, the teacher asked students who went on the pilgrimage. Although I had overheard students telling each other about their experiences, not one student volunteered to share it with the teacher (Fieldnotes). This may represent trepidation or unwillingness

to disclose their travels to the teacher.

Moreover, the example of the *Gammu* holiday also demonstrates how the school calendar ironically privileges Western holidays over Muslim holidays. In a town that is particularly loyal to the Tijaaniyaa brotherhood, this represents a disjuncture between the school and government calendars and local practices. In addition, students had a week off at Christmas and there is a two-week spring break around the Easter holiday with both Easter and Easter Monday identified as official holidays. The *Gammu* pilgrimage into the interior of the country, with all of the accompanying travel issues, requires more than the one day allotted by the school calendar. Furthermore, it is ironic that in a country with a population of over 95% Muslim, students and school staff are required to obtain permission to be absent when participating in such a religious pilgrimage.

In a similar example of teacher intervention that challenges local religious practices, Madame Sy shared with me how she had tried to convince a parent against performing a *ndeup* ceremony for her daughter, directly countering the Indigenous healing knowledge of the Lebou community. Madame Sy explained at length that there had been an issue with a female student who behaved strangely in class, sometimes participating and other times not. She indicated that the student was often bizarrely dressed as well. She explained:

> *La maman a dit, "elle a des problèmes des génies, des rabbs." Il fallait qu'on lui fasse de ndeup. Alors, j'ai dit à la maman, "Attention. Il faut des limites là, parce que des que tu fais ça une fois, s'ils le font, il faut qu'elle fasse." Après, son père l'a amené à Thies. Mais, je sais qu'ici, ils sont beaucoup, surtout les enfants attachés à ça. Il y a des jours de la semaine, où, par exemple, il faut qu'on aille, qu'on leur cherche du lait et on verse ça pour que les esprits apaisent.* / The mother said, "she has problems with spirits, the *rabb*." They needed to do an *ndeup* for her. So, I said to the mother, "Careful. There needs to be boundaries set here, because once you do it one time, if they do it [*ndeup*] again, she will need to go do it." After, her father brought her to Thies [large nearby town]. But, I know

> that here, there are many, especially children, who are affected by this. There are days during the week where, for example, they get milk for them so they may offer it to appease the spirits. (Veteran floating teacher, 1st Interview)

Although throughout our interviews, Madame Sy insisted several times that spirit possession is a real problem for many of the students and that it is an important part of the Lebou worldview, she also saw it as an obstacle to students succeeding in school. As illustrated in the above quote, she explains as such to the student's mother, trying to convince her to bring her daughter to the hospital instead. Of all the Lebou practices that were articulated during my research, the *ndeup* practice was regularly cited as the most controversial as it was criticized both my parents and teachers. However, the *ndeup* is a healing practice that remains inherently Lebou and, for many, a source of pride and renown that extends well beyond Senegal's borders. Nonetheless, many see the *ndeup* as being antithetical to education and in conflict with Islam. While there is potential for exploring this practice as an example of Lebou expertise and cultural strength, it seems teachers may undermine its value to both parents and students by repackaging the *ndeup* as negative.

In the above paragraphs I have shared two examples of how teachers push back against religious expressions that they feel interrupt schooling practices. The first was a Senegalese Muslim practice of the *Gammu* pilgrimage and the second, the quintessentially Lebou *ndeup* healing practice. In the next section, I turn to ways in which teachers oppose culture as disruptive to development efforts.

In Pursuit of Development

Additional examples illustrate teachers challenging local culture by way of

reasoning that calls upon issues that I have grouped together under the heading "development issues." These include equality, human rights, the environment, and adherence to Western science. For instance, several examples arise in which teachers profess equality and call into question already existing practices within the community. As I observed Monsieur Diouf's sixth grade class, I saw a lesson in which the teacher spoke about possible professions for students. This topic arose as the teacher reviewed a booklet with students provided by the Paul Gerin LaJoie Foundation. This organization is based in Canada and each year coordinates a dictation contest in French-speaking developing countries, such as Haiti, and many in Africa, including Senegal. The booklet provides exercises to develop students' vocabulary. The theme that I encountered during the research period was *les metiers d'aujourd'hui et de demain* (professions of today and tomorrow). One of the exercises asked students to identify the professions they wish to hold in the future. From a research-perspective, it was an ideal activity to observe in order to learn more about all students within the classroom. Students volunteered that they wished to pursue the following careers (Fieldnotes):

- nurse
- doctor
- pharmacist
- flight attendant
- government minister
- school director
- president of Senegal
- farmer
- civil engineer
- CEO
- accountant
- pilot
- mason
- police officer

Note that all of professions require formal schooling with the exception of the farmer and the mason. Still, none of them necessarily requires a profound understanding of culture or Indigenous knowledges. In regards to equality, as Monsieur Diouf (6th grade, host teacher) reviewed this lesson with students, he stated clearly that there are no

longer gendered tasks, that this has become an outdated practice. He said,

> *tout ça, c'est dépassé. Si on est apte, l'essentiel c'est d'être capable et compétent. Il y a des hommes domestiques.* / all of that is outdated. If one is able, what's essential is to be able and competent. There are men who work as domestics (Fieldnotes).

This last comment about men holding cleaning duties elicited much laughter among students. As I explored in Chapter 2, in many African societies, tasks are often divided up clearly between men and women, with women doing much of the childrearing and housekeeping. In many cases, this is a component of these societies' Indigenous knowledge base. As Monsieur Diouf's comment emphasizes gender equality, it calls into question the more traditional practice of gendered division of labor. However, students' laughter about a male domestic worker seems to challenge Monsieur Diouf's statement. Furthermore, the fact that only girls continue to be assigned sweeping duties at school (Fieldnotes) begs the question of the actual relevance of Monsieur Diouf's commentary and other elements of gender equity or democracy as applied within the school environment.

Similarly, Monsieur Ndiaye (1st grade teacher) spoke with me at length of how he and his colleagues emphasize human rights at school, thereby countering local practices. He explained that he had painted his previous classroom (now occupied by Madame Ka, 6th grade) with depictions of various human rights messages. He described the drawings as follows:

> *On voit les animaux qui sont là et qui se partage un repas. C'est le droit de manger à sa faim. Il y a le droit aussi d'aller à l'école. On dessine aussi un enfant qui porte son sac et qui part pour aller à l'école. C'est pour montrer aux enfants - sont des messages, n'est-ce pas. On a le droit d'aller à l'école. On voit par exemple, sur les dessins, un enfant qui porte de faggots de bois, etc., etc., et ça c'est quelque chose qu'il faut - et on met un bar. Donc, l'enfant n'a pas le droit à ca...Il y a des travaux pénibles. Mais, qu'est-ce qu'on démande à l'enfant? C'est*

> *de venir à l'école, de travailler bien, de se reposer à la maison, de reviser ses leçons.* / You see animals that are here and share a meal. It's the right to eat to one's full. There's also the right to go to school. There's also a drawing of a child who carries a bag and is leaving for school. It's to show students - they are messages, right. You have the right to go to school. You see for example, in the drawings, a child who is carrying pieces of wood, etc., etc., and that is something that we should - and there's a line through it. So, children don't have the right to do that. Some jobs are difficult. But, what is asked of a child? It's to go to school, to work hard, and to relax at home, to review their lessons. (Monsieur Ndiaye, 1st grade, Interview)

On this same theme of child labor, this same teacher also provided the example of how people in town collect sand at the beach for resale using horse-drawn carts. He explained how this is prohibited and that "*sont des choses dont auxquelles, il faut pousser l'enfant à les connaître* / these are things that, you need to push children to know" (Interview). It seems reasonable that this interdiction is due to environmental concerns of beach erosion. In both instances, Monsieur Ndiaye makes a strong statement against local practices of children participating in chores and the workforce. As I explained in Chapter 2, within this largely Lebou community, it is commonplace to see children helping their parents gathering shells or with fishing activities. Similarly, children are frequently seen selling items along the sides of the roads. While these are no doubt difficult activities, they remain part of many young people's routines. Monsieur Ndiaye challenges these practices as he invokes human rights in the first example and environmental protection and legality in the second.

Two additional examples further illustrate how classrooms can be places where teachers reframe prominent cultural practices, some of which challenge the culture's knowledge base. The first example again comes from Monsieur Diouf's sixth grade (host) classroom during a *Vivre dans son milieu* lesson on protecting the environment. It was a meandering lesson in which the teacher provided multiple examples of ways that people

can harm the environment: deforestation, removing sand from the beach, littering, throwing household waste into the ocean, industrial pollution, etc. These references are very much based in the local realities, for example, as the teacher talks about the importance of the beach:

> *Ils se baignent…Les populations, les charités…Ils viennent prendre de sable là-bas et le vendre à travers le village aux personnes…La mer peut avancer…Il y a des conséquences : Les maison détruites par les vagues.* / They bathe...the populations, offerings...They come take sand there and sell it to people throughout the village...The ocean can advance...There are consequences: houses destroyed by the waves (Fieldnotes).

He continues in his lesson to also cite how one of the town's largest factories is responsible for much of the water pollution in the area. He then moves on to identify how the common practice of gathering for important family ceremonies (baptisms, weddings, etc.) often entails loudly playing music through rented amplification equipment. The teacher described this phenomenon as "*une pollution sonore* / noise pollution" (Fieldnotes), thus critiquing and repositioning a practice with which students are very familiar. In discussions with parents, many of them referred to such activities as important cultural manifestations. They also spoke of the importance of having both a physical presence at and making financial contributions *(ndawtaal)* to these events. Monsieur Diouf's critique repositions these practices within a development framework as he argues for environmental protection and thus an end to various forms of pollution.

As a final example of teachers challenging culture and more specifically, Indigenous knowledge, within the classroom, I present an example of a science lesson from observing Monsieur Ba's fifth grade class. The subject of the lesson was the composition of soil. My fieldnotes detail how Monsieur Ba refers to a local practice of women - pregnant women, in particular - eating clay:

> "*Si m'assister – a creuser un puit – dama guss – kéo (le calcaire) – jigeen yi danu ko beg lekk su fekké nungi ci etat. Il y a beaucoup de femme qui meurent – on peut pas le digerer /* If you help me - to dig a well - I dig - *kéo* (limestone) - women like to eat it if they are pregnant. There are a lot of women who die - they can't digest it.*"* [Students have something to say – pointing at someone – I don't know what they are talking about] Teacher continues, "*dafa xawa niro ak bun…imaginer donc, vous mangez ça – men na leen febar – bu seen doom bi judo /* it kind of looks like mud...imagine then, you eat that - it can make you sick - when your child is born" [A student wants to speak. Teacher insists that student speaks in French]. Student says "*on construit le vendre / they are building their stomachs*" – teacher says that that's what Africans say. [He says more but I don't catch it all.] (Fieldnotes)

Pregnant women eating these bits of dried white clay is a widespread practice evident from vendors selling it at make-shift tables that line the roads and in the market. While Monsieur Ba recognizes that this practice is also a component of Indigenous knowledge, his presentation of the practice to students is extremely critical, identifying it as dangerous and relegating this knowledge to folk practices in contrast to *science* and arguing that it is bad for one's health. Moreover, this sort of viewpoint is reminiscent of other teachers' comments. During interviews with research participants, a lack of scientific grounding was a common criticism for practices rooted in Indigenous knowledges. These included traditional medicine; widely held beliefs, for instance, where one could go and at what time; and oral histories. To illustrate, I provide examples of related comments from interviews in the table below:

Table 8.1: Participant critiques of Indigenous knowledges

Traditional medicine	*"il n'y a pas de dosage* / there is no dosage" (Director, 2nd interview)
Widely held beliefs about space and time	"*ça n'existe dans aucun document ou bien, c'est pas verifié, quoi* / it doesn't exist in any document, or, it's not verified, you know" (Madame Diouf, 4th grade)"
Oral history	*"c'est pas très, très fiable, comme c'est juste l'histoire orale - c'est pas écrit. Souvent une personne te dit cette version, une personne te dit une autre version.... /* it's not very, very reliable, as it's just oral history - it's not written. Often one person tells you this version, another person tells you another version..." (Research Associate, in support of Monsieur Diouf's comments, Interview #2)

All of these instances passed judgment on Indigenous knowledges as lacking grounding in true scientific discourse. Returning to the example of pregnant women eating clay in Monsieur Diallo's (5th grade) class, the student's recognition of this practice and interruption that "*on construit le vendre* / they are building their stomachs" is met by the teacher's assertion that it is what "Africans[19] say," implying that such knowledge is of lesser value. Such a comment both undermines the knowledge itself, as well as degrades being African. In this instance, African saying and beliefs are associated with lower quality information. In spite of using an *enquête* to send students back into the community, this example also clearly shows how schooling may continue to be dismissive of African realities and forms of knowledge.

These above examples have touched upon ways in which teachers may question and even contradict local practices or Indigenous knowledges under the guise of development objectives. These include initiatives for equality, human rights, improved health, and campaigns against child labor. While this study does not attempt to judge the validity of any of these claims, my point here is that teachers sometimes criticize local culture as an obstacle to development and scientific advancement. All these development related examples and the religious examples of the previous section occur at school and were conducted in the absence of transformative discussions that examine the origins and merits of such conflicting practices. Such conversations might help students to navigate the multiple truths that make up their realities. These discussions are highly recommended in the research on Indigenous knowledges in education (see Dei, 2000a,

[19] The teacher's use of the term "Africans," rather than identifying a particular ethnic group or even nationality, also demonstrates what I have remarked to be a sense of shared culture, a Senegalese culture.

2000b, 2002, 2010; Odora Hoppers, 2005; Wane, 2005). Allowing space for such conversations would permit students to make their own determinations about the validity of the different beliefs, and if applicable, determine ways to conceptualize their co-existence. In the next section, I present illustrations of how teachers may challenge local cultures in their work outside of school.

Beyond School Grounds

In order to further schooling objectives, teachers often challenge local practices in children's' homes, beyond the school grounds. Recruitment and retention efforts provide clear examples, such as when Madame Sy (Veteran floating teacher) came across a younger Pape Diop (focus group participant) working as a mason and subsequently convinced his parents to let him come to school. Such efforts were particularly evident with another teacher, Madame Ka (6th grade teacher), who has been tasked with an advocacy role as part of a girls' schooling development project. On two occasions, I joined Madame Ka in her awareness-raising efforts. The first instance was a *visite à domicile (VAD)* (home visit) in which Madame Ka visited parents to impress upon them the importance of supporting their daughters' education. The parent was Pape Diop's mother. In the first part of the conversation, Madame Ka spoke at length about the importance of girls' education. Pape Diop's mother explained how one of her daughters has already left school to help her collect shells in order to meet the family's daily needs. In response, Madame Ka reiterated that keeping her daughters in school will be worth more in the long-term than short-term gains. While Madame Ka is remunerated for her activities related to the development project - namely visits to meet with parents and

organized discussions like the example I present next - she takes great pride in her efforts and seems to be firmly committed to the cause of increasing girls' school attendance.

The second instance of project-related advocacy was a *causerie* (discussion) that Madame Ka organized for 6th grade and middle school girls. The discussion was held in Madame Ka's regular classroom. Over 40 girls attended the session. During this discussion, Madame Ka spoke entirely in Wolof with the girls about the issue of unplanned pregnancies, identified contributing factors, and explained what students might do to avoid falling pregnant. The practice that she most challenged in her discussion was girls sleeping with men for small financial gifts, largely a symptom of poverty. She explained how these men could be relatives, neighbors, teachers, etc. Unfortunately, given economic conditions, this seems to be a fairly common practice, even for girls this young. Madame Ka's message was to stay in school, but also to maintain one's virginity, thus reinforcing traditional values. To illustrate, I include notes from Madame Ka's presentation to the girls:

- Maybe others might call you "*sër bi – nekk sër* / a nun - being a nun." Says this is better than having sex. If it's a boy who is a student – *élève bi* / a student – who gets you pregnant – "*dina agale jeng. Yo, yangi jaay chaf, nekk ci mbedmi di taxawalu* / he'll finish his studies. You, you'll sell peanuts, be outside just hanging around."
- If "*sont les professeurs – avec les cours particuliers* / they are high school teachers - with individual tutoring sessions" - be cautious. If anything inappropriate happens, "*yuxuleen ba ci kaaw* / yell very loudly." Same is true for "*les maîtres* / primary school teachers." Says can do "*cours particuliers* / private tutoring sessions" in groups but not individually. Not safe. "*Jigeen mooy société bi. Buleen maay ñu yaaxu société bi.* / Women are society. Don't let them ruin our society" (Fieldnotes).

This is a particularly complicated example because, while Madame Ka is challenging a somewhat common practice of informal prostitution, her challenge both supports traditional values of virginity as well as a development agenda. This example also brings

into question when a practice can be considered to be "cultural." Girls looking to older men for money in return for sexual favors has become a growing problem in many areas of Senegal, as is true in other developing countries. Yet, it is doubtful that a Senegalese person would refer to this as "cultural."

In addition to these project-related activities, during our interview, Madame Ka provided the example of how she has tried to intervene with the parents of a student who is promised to be married at the end of the year. She had no luck in convincing the parents to change their decision about their daughter's future:

> *J'en avais parlé avec la maman et je lui ai dit que "ça c'est un crime. Déjà, biologiquement, elle n'est pas prête." En faite, c'est le problème de nos parents Peuhls. Sont les mariages précoces là-bas. On donne très tôt les filles.* / I had spoken with the mother and I said to her, "it's a crime. Already, she's not ready biologically." Really, that's the problem with our Pulaar relatives. For them, it's all about early marriages. They give away their daughters very early (Madame Ka, 6th grade, Interview)

This quote demonstrates this teacher's efforts to speak with parents in support of girls' education. Moreover, it is an example of a teacher attempting to influence parents' decisions and, in this particular circumstance, she is challenging the deep-set Pulaar practice of early marriage. Certainly, this instance is even more significant because Madame Ka is herself Pulaar. During our interview, she had indicated that she was lucky because her father had been a teacher and his father before him. As a result, he made real efforts for his daughters to attend school. However, she had a sister who had a different father and who was married off early. She blames this on her mother not having gone to school ("*pas instruite"*) (Fieldnotes). These examples demonstrate the presence of multiple moral codes and a clear tension between traditional sensibilities and understandings fostered by schooling. As for the student engaged to be married at the end

of the school year, Madame Ka explained that she seemed unphased by her upcoming marriage. This student stands at the intersection of two conflicting messages: Pulaar traditions of early marriage as upheld by her father and the imperative to remain in school as espoused by teachers and, in general, the development discourse. At the moment, it seems that her father's message is the stronger of the two.

Furthermore, teachers' recruitment and retention efforts testify to the elevated status that teachers hold and affirm within Senegalese society. Many community members revere teachers because of their level of education (at least having completed middle school and many beyond that) and view teachers as role models and success stories. Many teachers, in turn, internalize this veneration and feel that it is their duty to intervene in the lives of children and parents in support of schooling. I find this role highly controversial, partly because it seems that in doing so, teachers assume the insignificance and invalidity of other configurations of roles within the family unit. For instance, Madame Ka advocates for girls going to school rather than helping parents in their work to overcome a difficult financial situation. While undoubtedly, children who succeed in school will potentially have better possibilities later in life, the underlying assumptions about home life and values may be bothersome. On the other hand, due to my research design's focus on people affiliated with and committed to schooling, I did not encounter individuals who readily questioned the role of teachers or the role of formal education in general. Further research among out-of-school children and their families may help to provide more insights into how those more critical of school may perceive teachers and the roles that they may play in challenging local cultures and Indigenous knowledges.

Summary

This chapter provided examples of how teachers both support and challenge local cultures and knowledges through their teaching and other related activities. While in previous chapters, I provided concrete examples of how lessons may include cultural elements, here, I concentrated more on teachers' understanding of their role as cultural agents and interrupters. I began this chapter by discussing the importance of a teacher doing cultural research on the environment in which they will be teaching, particularly if they are not from that area. This is the case of all but one of the 12 teachers that I interviewed. I then moved on to show that many teachers take pride in inculcating students in good morals and cultural values, largely because they view students as "blank slates" when they arrive at school. In many ways, when teachers are emphasizing good morals and good behaviors, they are doing so according to shared cultural values present within the larger Senegalese society. On the other hand, there are also instances in which teachers rebuff local practices and beliefs, and in this way, challenge local knowledges. Above, I presented examples where teachers question the religious practices of the *Gammu* pilgrimage and the Lebou *ndeup* healing practice. I grouped teachers' challenges according to two analytical themes: practices that are seen as disruptive to education, and practices that obstruct development objectives. Lastly, I presented examples of teachers moving beyond the gates of the school to challenge local practices, either as part of a development project or as part of their recruitment efforts. In sum, teachers play a nuanced and complex role as they uphold some elements of cultures while challenging

others. Once more, these observations reinforce that cultures and Indigenous knowledges are pluralistic, layered, and dynamic in nature.

CHAPTER 9

THE BIG PICTURE: FINAL SYNTHESIS & REFLECTIONS

Overwhelmingly, the literature on formal education in African settings highlights a disconnect between students' realities within the home and communities and those they encounter once within schoolyard gates and classrooms. Areas of misalignment include the general schooling structure and philosophy, language of instruction, and learning content. Furthermore, the trend has been for school systems to closely mimic the structure and content of former colonial powers. Senegal is no exception to this trend. Although the country recently celebrated over five decades of independence, seemingly for both practical and historical purposes, the Senegalese schooling system remains a close replica of the French system. Unfortunately, when schooling and students' experiences and cultures are misaligned in this way, the consequences may be numerous. They include a devaluation and marginalization of cultures and Indigenous knowledges, growing inequalities between social elites and the masses, negative implications for learning, and negative psychological ramifications. The latter are particularly troublesome as they lead to inferiority complexes that reinforce the complex post-colonial situation and contribute to cycles of irrelevancy and marginalization of Indigenous knowledges and cultures.

In response, educational and linguistic experts, as well as cultural proponents, are calling for a greater Africanization of African schools' structures and curriculum. Within this literature, a growing number of voices, many of which are themselves African, advocate for greater recognition of African cultures and, specifically, Indigenous knowledges and their inclusion within schooling frameworks. Acknowledgment of

Indigenous knowledges is a political assertion of cultural validity often in opposition to Western knowledges, which have largely been understood as universal and authoritative.

In this study, I explore the relationship between schooling activities and students' home lives and experiences through a compressed ethnographic study of one peri-urban school. The research design relies upon a number of complementary techniques, including interviews, participant observation, focus groups, photo elicitation, and audio and video recording. The particular school chosen for this study offers a unique setting because it represents both a traditional Lebou village and new settlements for Dakar's expanding and diverse population. In this way, it offers unique insights simultaneously reflecting more traditional and urban sensibilities.

Positioning cultures, and Indigenous knowledges within them, as dynamic, heterogeneous, and layered locates this study within the overarching theoretical framework of post-modern, post-structural and post-colonial theories. These bodies of scholarship stress plurality and multiple voices. Within these theories, anti-colonial and decolonizing approaches both emphasize the need for local recognition and ownership of educational experiences and how cultures and knowledges are positioned. With the above concerns in mind and this theoretical framing, this study addressed the following research questions:

- Is schooling alienating and disconnected from student realities?
- How might school activities and classroom practice, specifically in their treatment of cultures and Indigenous knowledges, reinforce the hegemonic status quo and/or to the contrary, support anti-colonial or decolonizing objectives?

- What are potential openings and areas for continued growth for integrating cultures and Indigenous knowledges within schools?

In this present chapter, I provide a synthesis of the previous data chapters in order to address these questions. This discussion provides the larger picture for understanding the study's contributions to the field of international education. Below, I organize my commentary into three sections: 1) promising practices, 2) remaining challenges and areas for growth, and 3) areas for future research. I close this chapter with some final reflections on the pertinence of this study to the field of comparative and international education.

Promising Practices

In general, the findings from this study are somewhat surprising, illuminating a new competency-based curriculum approach (*le Curriculum)* that has the potential to center students' experiences and cultures. To sum up the answer to the first research question, this study shows that, while schooling still remains firmly entrenched in Western paradigms of education, experiences at this school reflect students' realities in a number of ways. This shift may indicate a generational development, in which today's younger people are experiencing a school that is much more tolerant and cognizant of Senegalese realities. Nonetheless, the overall paradigm of education remains Western in nature and highly influenced by the French educational system. As Chapters 5-8 attest, there are a number of ways that cultures permeate both informal and formal activities at the school studied. For analytical purposes, I have divided the findings according to how cultures manifest implicitly on the school grounds, their presence within instruction and

individual subjects, as well as through teachers' attitudes and gestures. In this section, I bring those areas together for one final synthesis. To summarize, promising practices towards integrating cultures and Indigenous knowledges within schooling include:

- **Senegalese culture serves as the backdrop for school interactions**: A common Senegalese culture is present within the interactions of students, school personnel, and between these two groups. Examples include habitual Senegalese greetings; the presence of Muslim influences; expressions of family, solidarity, and care for one another; as well as the use of corporal punishment as a classroom management strategy.
- **Wolof features prominently, both informally and within lessons**: Findings demonstrate a high level of code-switching between French and Wolof that is present in all grade levels at this school. This includes grade six classrooms, where students are preparing for the national exam. Data also show the use of Wolof as a de facto language of instruction (LOI) for entire lessons, although language usage remains at the level of oral expression with a written summary being in French. Outside of lessons, interactions within the school grounds take place among individuals largely in Wolof. As one teacher explained, this is even true of professional development activities. Wolof is used to improve instruction as well as to foster comfortable learning environments. Using Wolof in this manner demonstrates teachers' recognition of the importance of national languages as instructional tools, as well as their perceived responsibility to students, both as educators and members of their community.

- **Culturally relevant texts function as the cornerstone of the new *Curriculum:*** Participant observation of lessons and perusal of *Curriculum* documents show that texts refer to local activities; places with which students identify; values, such as respect for elders, etc. Teachers also feel compelled to adapt lessons further to reflect local surroundings. In this competency-based approach, then, the texts serve as the principal point of departure for a variety of lessons, thus centering local realities.
- **Student investigations (*les enquêtes)* invite community knowledge:** More than any other teaching method, student investigations acknowledge individuals and places outside of the school gates as possessors of knowledge. Students also become knowledge creators, altering traditional teacher-student power dynamics. Findings demonstrate that teachers use student investigations in almost all subject areas. Many teachers see them as important tools for facilitating teaching and making important connections with parents.
- **Several subjects favor cultural integration**, including history, geography, *Vivre ensemble*, *Vivre dans son milieu*, the arts, and religious instruction: Within these subjects, local concerns as well as cultural references and histories often take prominence. One teacher indicated that the inclusion of Senegalese history has long been part of formal schooling. While the literature on Indigenous knowledges focuses largely on math and science instruction (Lipka et al., 2009; Chikodzi & Nyota, 2010; Semali & Mehta, 2013), findings from this study illustrate how these other subjects also support cultural relevancy. Moreover,

students stated that they enjoyed learning about their histories and found it to be meaningful to their lives.

- **Official religious instruction reflects popular interests:** Findings from this study demonstrate that religious instruction was incorporated at this school long before its official statewide mandate in 2002. Its official inclusion within the national curriculum responded to pressures for universal schooling as well as parental desires and political tensions (Charlier, 2002; Sarre, 2002). As Islam in Senegal incorporates a number of significant local interpretations, religious instruction within the formal curriculum represents substantial evidence of departure from the French school system and the embrace of local realities.
- **Teachers perceive cultural relevancy as good teaching**: The teachers within this study overwhelmingly expressed that it is their professional duty to become familiar with students' backgrounds and cultures. In order to improve learning, teachers often introduce content beginning with what students know, and moving out in concentric circles to more distant contexts and knowledge. Teachers also expressed their duty as moral educators to instill students with Senegalese culture. They do this in a number of ways, including seizing upon learning moments and insisting upon shared cultural values. According to discussions with students, such teachings are well-received.

Many of the above practices are fostered by the new *Curriculum*. As I have emphasized in previous chapters, the new *Curriculum* seems to present an opening for greater cultural relevancy, both through insistence on texts that feature activities, people, and concepts occurring in Senegal, as well as through insistence on pedagogical

techniques, like student investigations (*les enquêtes)*, which force students to connect with knowledge held within the community. This knowledge is then brought back for discussion within lessons. In addition, group work is another feature of the new *Curriculum* and is indicated as a possible learning preference for African students (see Chapter 2). Although the formulation of the *Curriculum* was largely in response to development objectives, it nonetheless fosters integrating local references and, in albeit rare cases, Indigenous knowledges. Again, this finding counters cultural conditionality, in which donors typically define both the structure of schooling as well as the culture and content of schooling (see Chapters 2 and 6 above; also Brock-Utne, 2000).

Additionally, the overwhelming use of Wolof at the school, despite French being the LOI, and the official incorporation of religious instruction within the curriculum may provide evidence of decolonizing efforts on the part of teachers. Recall that decolonizing methods denote when individuals shed off colonial holdovers and instead embrace Indigenous cultural elements and knowledges, validating these elements. As I demonstrated in Chapter 6, this study illustrates two teachers' use of Wolof as LOI. This goes beyond code-switching, which was common in all grades. In follow-up interviews, both teachers stated that they found Wolof to be the best medium for communicating the lessons with students. They also professed their sense of responsibility to students, both as educators and as parents.

Similarly, the Arabic language and religion teacher, as described in Chapter 7, expressed taking a calculated risk in her earlier years as a teacher before the official 2002 decree that religious instruction be provided. Prior to 2002, she also felt it her duty to teach students about Islamic practices. Given that approximately 95% of the Senegalese

population is Muslim, inclusion of religious education represents a significant step towards more culturally relevant curriculum. Moreover, as official religious education may also have been a response to EFA pressures, it demonstrates another intersection between development goals and efforts to integrate Senegalese cultures and Indigenous knowledges within formal schooling. These three cases (the two teachers using Wolof as LOI, and the Arabic language and religion teacher) provide strong evidence of teachers using their positions of power to reinforce what they understand to be Senegalese culture. Although the above practices are indeed promising for integrating cultures and Indigenous knowledges within formal schooling, this study also identified a number of challenges and obstacles that continue to impede such integration. I turn to these elements in the next section.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

While this study provides insights into promising practices within one Senegalese urban-school for integrating cultures and Indigenous knowledges, it also provides evidence of remaining challenges and areas of growth. They include:

- **Limited resources impact cultural relevancy:** Throughout this study, teachers repeatedly cited poverty as well as a lack of school materials as serious concerns that impact student learning. Indeed, when students are hungry, it is doubtful that learning with be effective, no matter how culturally relevant the learning content may be. The lack of available *Curriculum* textbooks, such as the *Album de lecture* (reading compilation) was a great preoccupation for teachers and students and limited the use of texts. While teachers made great efforts to photocopy the books for students, a lack of financial resources continues to limit the use of new

materials. The time teachers spent to convince students and parents to submit money for photocopies, and their coordination of collection and material production, detracts from learning time.

- **French remains the LOI:** In spite of teachers' recognition of the usefulness of national languages as pedagogical tools, the majority of lessons remain in French with all reading and writing in French. As I demonstrated in Chapter 7, students also spend the greatest number of hours studying French; findings from this study identify French as being the least culturally relevant subject at school.
- **Little evidence of African learning preferences:** Although the literature on culturally relevant pedagogy provides insights into ways that African students may prefer to learn, such as through participatory communication techniques or through more collective methods (see Chapter 2), this study revealed few instances of such. To the contrary, both teachers and students expressed discomfort with group work activities. Possible learning preferences remains an area for further exploration, although data from this study signal that their relevance may be limited.
- **Community involvement is minimal:** With the exception of student investigations that are tightly controlled by teachers, community involvement is highly limited at this school. There is a need to go beyond student investigations to work towards a truly locally supported curriculum (see Keane, 2008; Lipka, et al., 2009 for counter-examples).
- **Indigenous knowledges are rarely incorporated:** While data provide many examples of how schooling may be culturally relevant, incorporation of actual

Indigenous knowledges was rarely discernable at the school. Indigenous knowledges are elements of culture that reveal an understanding of the environment and a related set of processes allowing possessors of that knowledge to act within and manipulate that environment. Certainly, I did not witness their incorporation to the extent that researchers have identified in other settings (see Lipka & McCarty, 1994; Keane, 2008; Lipka, et al., 2009; Chikodzi & Nyota, 2010). In these studies, math and science serve as the target subject areas for incorporating Indigenous knowledges. In contrast, as I observed math and science lessons at this school, cultural references were included but mainly as auxiliary pedagogical supports. Nonetheless, examples of Indigenous knowledges from the research site to potentially incorporate within schooling include numerical logic based in national languages; fishing and navigation habits; oral histories and tales (*leb)*; healing practices; and spiritual beliefs, such as the *ndeup.*

- **Use of culturally relevant examples may be largely symbolic and essentialized:** Although findings demonstrate multiple cultural references, inclusion of these elements may remain largely superficial and essentialized. Examples include how teachers revert to the arts as evidence of cultural integration. Also, the continued reliance on the town's oral historian, while he feels that his role remains stagnant and underappreciated (see Chapter 6). While these references are valuable, they do not fully access the richness of what deeper cultural knowledge and logic may offer. In many ways, the school continues to package culture for students' consumption and teachers act as cultural gatekeepers. Data from this study point particularly at how teachers receive,

process, and summarize information collected during student investigations. As I presented in Chapter 6, examples showed that teachers both support local cultures and Indigenous knowledges while also marking its inferiority compared with school and Western scientific knowledges. In one case, a teacher referred to Indigenous knowledges about pregnant women eating clay as something that "Africans say." In this manner, he dismissed it as folk knowledge, not on par with the scientific knowledge he was presenting (see Chapter 8). Such dismissal of Indigenous knowledges continues to feed into post-colonial influences and the colonization of knowledges.

While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to propose a comprehensive list of recommendations responding to the above challenges, particularly those involving socioeconomic factors and structural changes, some avenues for growth nonetheless emerge from this study's findings. For instance, and rooted in the literature on Indigenous knowledges and education, increased critical awareness is needed in order to foster learning that accounts for multiple cultural layers and allows students to navigate a plurality of knowledges. Such critical awareness is imperative for learning to be transformative (Dei, 2000a, 2000b, 2002, 2010; Odora Hoppers, 2005; Wane, 2005) and anti-colonial.

For this to be possible, teachers need additional training to increase their own critical awareness and to learn strategies for encouraging such discussions within lessons. To support these conversations, there needs to be space within the curriculum that encourages students to make their own determinations about the validity of the different cultures and knowledges, and how to conceptualize their co-existence (Semali, 1999).

These conversations would also recognize the diversity of multiple Senegalese cultures. While Wolofization and other factors have resulted in a common Senegalese culture and perhaps a trajectory for national identity, this may be to the detriment of less dominant cultures and languages (Cruise O'Brien, 2003; Diallo, 2010). The question remains of how to continue to support a shared Senegalese culture while also acknowledging diversity. A more critical approach may provide a solution.

In addition, data presented here underline the need for additional efforts to incorporate national languages as LOIs, in accordance with already existent policies. Findings demonstrate a number of compelling reasons for using Wolof within instruction, including that it creates a comfortable environment for students and allows for improved communication. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to address obstacles to language policy change, this study provides additional support for incorporating national languages within instruction. I turn next to other areas of future research that are suggested by this present study.

Possible Future Research

Like all research endeavors, this dissertation reveals other avenues for future inquiry that may contribute to better understanding and promoting cultural relevancy and Indigenous knowledges within schooling in Senegal, as well as in other areas. Ideally, these studies would take a participatory approach, involving multiple stakeholders. Such investigations may include:

- **Continued and more systematic language usage studies within schools:** As indicated in Chapter 6, there is little research detailing the usage of French and

other national languages within instruction in Senegal. The RTI (2010) study provides one exception, however, its findings are challenged by this present dissertation. Future studies might further explore 1) how national languages are used within instruction and for what purposes, 2) by whom (ethnic group, educational background, gender, etc.), 3) during what subject period, and 4) with regards to the impact on student learning. Furthermore, Swigart (1994)'s linguistic analysis of urban Wolof identifies a new registry rather than code-switching. Analysis of the use of Wolof within classrooms in particular may reveal that Wolof is used in a manner that indeed goes beyond the code-switching that is characteristic in many other countries (see Brock-Utne & Alidou, 2011).

- **Textual analysis of new *Curriculum* materials**: This present study has explored the cultural relevancy of texts used during observations of lessons, but has not performed a systematic inquiry of the texts in their entirety. In-depth textual analysis, perhaps even a discourse analysis, may provide additional insights into how cultures are described and positioned within the new *Curriculum*. This may also further illuminate the relation of a common Senegalese culture with other less dominant cultures.
- **Impact analysis of the new *Curriculum* on the end-of-cycle exam as well as student progression within lower grades:** The timing of field research coincided with the last year of the roll-out of the new *Curriculum.* As indicated above, subsequent reporting has shown that summer exams addressed the new *Curriculum* (Ndiaye, 2013). Further study of the new curriculum's impact on exam results may provide further insights into the usefulness and consequences of

the *Curriculum*'s implementation. Similarly, investigations into student progression through the other grades may also provide meaningful findings as to the utility of the new materials and the *Curriculum's* competency-based approach.

- **Comparative study of urban and rural environments:** Here, I have argued that the town in question is a unique case because it simultaneously represents a traditional Lebou village and new settlements for migrants to Dakar's expansion. In this way, this study provides insights into education within a homogenous population as well as one that is incredibly diverse. Future comparative studies of cultural relevancy and the new *Curriculum* in both urban and rural environments may be useful in drawing conclusions about the overall significance of efforts as well as the specific needs within rural and/or urban environments.
- **More investigation into African learning preferences:** While the literature on African education and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy reveals possibilities where African learning preferences may create opportunities for more learner-centered and learner-relevant approaches (see Chapter 2), this current study is unable to provide significant commentary or evidence. Future research into the existence of African learning preferences and, if they do continue to exist, exploring the implications for shifting the educational paradigm could certainly provide insights that may promote effective curriculum reform.
- **Research among out-of-school children and their families:** This current study focuses on students who are in school and their families. They represent students who have succeeded within the school system. To obtain a more comprehensive understanding of schooling's relevancy or lack thereof would require inquiries

with students and their families who have either left school or who do not support formal schooling. Such work may also illuminate how those more critical of formal schooling may perceive teachers and the roles that they may play in challenging local cultures and Indigenous knowledges.

- **Similar investigations of alternative school systems (Franco-Arabic schools, Quoranic schools, community schools, bilingual schools, private Catholic schools, etc.):** Senegal's educational system acknowledges a number of formal schooling options. This study has explored formal schooling in the French tradition, particularly because most Senegalese children attend these public schools. However, similar explorations into other schooling formats may provide additional information, including alternative strategies, relationships with families and communities, and overall schooling paradigms.

Closing Reflections

In many ways, this study has been ambitious in its breadth. In engaging with the vast and expansive concept of culture, I found it necessary to address a number of distinct but interrelated literatures and discourses, including Indigenous knowledges, culturally relevant pedagogy, language issues, and curriculum reform. While it was beyond the scope of this study to provide an exhaustive account of all of these expansive bodies of scholarship, I have chosen here to focus on the intersections that highlight how local cultures, and Indigenous knowledges in particular, may be incorporated within formal schooling. Moreover, the choice of Indigenous knowledges as a guiding framework and analytical category makes the political argument for the recognition of alternative forms

of knowledge and ways of knowing. This is particularly relevant in settings that experience post-colonial pressures, for example, continued reliance on the French language and schooling models within the Senegalese formal education system.

Drawing from the literature, the argument is that greater cultural relevancy may contribute to improving student engagement, educational outcomes, and perhaps most importantly, contributing to a process of decolonization and the revalidation of local cultures and Indigenous knowledges. This study contributes to relevant discourses in providing a thick description of the ways in which Senegalese culture may be visible within the school grounds. Through close analysis, I have demonstrated that, while a number of challenges and areas for growth remain as obstacles to a more Africanized curriculum, the materials and approaches demonstrated at this one primary school in peri-urban Senegal foster a learning environment that not only tolerates a commonly shared culture, but in many ways, encourages and supports it.

As I have argued throughout, the context of this one particular school is in many ways unique but also typical of similar towns in which there are populations of both original inhabitants and newcomers taking advantage of urban opportunities. The school is in a peri-urban area that is expanding rapidly as the nation's capital continues to grow. Simultaneously, the Lebou community has a rich history and ties to the land and sea, and exhibits a profound cultural background and the presence of Indigenous knowledges, such as fishing, healing, and spiritual practices. The community also has a history of aversion to schooling, which school personnel claim has been dissipated through school advocacy campaigns, and perhaps more so, with the influence of new arrivals to the area. At the same time, this setting, like others in Senegal, is sensitive to the dynamism of its

environment, particularly arising from Wolofization. Thus, it seems possible to speak of a common Senegalese culture and an emerging composite identity in addition to Lebou, Pulaar, Muslim, and other cultures that may compose the layered realities of peoples' lives. This school, in many ways, serves as a site of reproduction and consolidation of that common culture, particularly given that it is the meeting place not only for a diverse population of students, but also a diversified teaching corps. This study elucidates considerations that may be applicable to other contexts, both within rural and urban areas of Senegal, as well as to other areas in Africa, particularly those that were also former French colonies.

By no means should my arguments here be understood as an attempt to silence the voices from the literature claiming that education in many African contexts is alienating. Such perceptions and personal testimonies provide important historical perspectives, reminders of the invisibility and power of schooling hegemony, as well as continued calls to action. Furthermore, even at the particular school that served as the focus of this study, there remains considerable room for growth in the ways that schooling may be even more culturally relevant, especially in regards to incorporating Indigenous knowledges. Certainly, additional efforts are needed that more directly challenge the overall paradigm of schooling and learning.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the current *Curriculum,* as well as various actions and attitudes on the part of school personnel, bring cultures, and to a limited extent, Indigenous knowledges, into the classroom in ways that have not yet been expressed within the literature. Obviously, teachers and other members of school personnel play a complex role as they reinforce certain elements of cultures while

challenging others. Once more, these observations emphasize that cultures and Indigenous knowledges are pluralistic, layered, and dynamic in nature. Given the current state of Senegalese formal schooling that continues to favor French rather than national languages as the LOI, this study documents important examples of greater cultural relevancy that may be possible even within a French-speaking environment. While this discussion acknowledges the continued work that is necessary to achieve even greater relevancy and foster a critical approach to understanding cultural layering, it nonetheless provides evidence of cultural relevancy as well as some efforts at decolonization. In this manner, this dissertation may make a significant contribution to the field of comparative and international education.

APPENDIX A

SENEGALESE GRADE EQUIVALENCIES

Senegalese Grade Level	American Grade Equivalent
Cours d'Initiation (CI)	1st grade
Cours Préparatoire (CP)	2nd grade
Cours Elémentaire 1 (CE1)	3rd grade
Cours Elémentaire 2 (CE2)	4th grade
Cours Moyen 1 (CM1)	5th grade
Cours Moyen 2 (CM2)	6th grade

APPENDIX B

REGIONAL MAP OF SENEGAL

Accessed on February 9, 2014 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regions_of_Senegal

APPENDIX C

TIMELINE OF DAILY ACTIVITIES DURING RESEARCH PERIOD

Field Work - Registry of Daily Activities and Data Collected									
Week	**Day**	**Date**	**Activities**	**Research associate present**	**#Day Obs.**	**School Observation**	**# hours observed**	**Video**	**Audio**
Prep.	Friday	12/28/12	Arrival in Senegal						
	Sunday	1/6/13	Visit to Research Associate's town - meet with Research Associate, Monsieur Diouf and Monsieur Ndiaye						
	Monday	1/7/13	First visit to school, Meet Monsieur Diouf at school, speak with Director, introduced to other teachers during recess			X			
	Friday	1/11/13	Meeting with Research Associate in Dakar						
	Thursday	1/17/13	Observation - first day with Monsieur Diouf		1	8:30-1	4.5		
	Friday	1/18/13	Observation - Monsieur Diouf's class; Arabic class (Madame Sall)		2	8:00-1	5		
	Saturday	1/19/13							
	Sunday	1/20/13							

Week	Day	Date	Activities	Research associate present	#Day Obs.	School Observation	# hours observed	Video	Audio
1	Monday	1/21/13	Observation - Monsieur Diouf's class; meeting with Director; walking around town; first lunch at Madame Diallo's house		3	8:00-1	5		
	Tuesday	1/22/13	Vacation - Gammu						
	Wednesday	1/23/13	Vacation - Gammu						
	Thursday	1/24/13	Vacation - Gammu						
	Friday	1/25/13	Vacation - Gammu						
	Saturday	1/26/13							
	Sunday	1/27/13	Went to Research Associate's town - interviewed Monsieur Ndiaye and Monsieur Diouf	X					X
2	Monday	1/28/13	Monsieur Diouf's class; identified students for focus group, first initial focus group (#1 - prise de contact)		4	8:00-1; 16-18:15	7.5	X	X
	Tuesday	1/29/13	Monsieur Ndiaye's class; watch his class before teacher arrives; Arabic teacher disciplines; PM in Monsieur Ndiaye's class		5	9:30-1; 15:20-17:00	6	X	
	Wednesday	1/30/13	Monsieur Diouf's class; Arabic 9-10 - interviewed Madame Ka, first focus group with students; Recess; afternoon with Madmae Ka (*causerie*)	X	6	8-9; 11:30-1;16-18:30	4.5		X
	Thursday	1/31/13	Monsieur Diouf's class; hand out cameras to focus group participants		7	8-1; 15-6:30	6.5	X	
	Friday	2/1/13	Monsieur Diouf's class; Friday "pot" at Recess	X	8	8:00-1	5	X	
	Saturday	2/2/13							
	Sunday	2/3/13							

Week	Day	Date	Activities	Research associate present	#Day Obs.	School Observation	# hours observed	Video	Audio
3	Monday	2/4/13	Madame Sarr's class; interview with Madame Sarr; interview with Monsieur Sy; Monsieur Diouf's class (PM); interview with Director (#1)		9	8:00-11; 15-17	5	X	X
	Tuesday	2/5/13	Monsieur Diouf's class; Mme. Sarr in afternoon (interview); development project home visits *(visites à domiciles)*/interviews with 2 parents		10	8-1; 15-17	7	X	X
	Wednesday	2/6/13	Monsieur Diouf's class 8-9; did not sit in on Arabic class; Interview with Monsieur Diouf's former landlord (at recess time); sitting in courtyard upon return, Madame Sy comes to get us for interview; no PM class	X	11	8-9; 10-11	2		X
	Thursday	2/7/13	Madame Diallo's class; interview with Madame Sy (part II)		12	8:00-12:30; 3-5	6.5	X	X
	Friday	2/8/13	Monsieur Diouf's class (includes gym class); Madame Ndoye's class after Recess (includes staff "pot")		13	8:00-1	5		
	Saturday	2/9/13	Conversation with Director while waiting (memoire); Photovoice (girls)/focus group #2 part 1; visits to families (Yaay Adama's mother, Khady Diallo's mother, Ndeye Aicha's father)	X					X
	Sunday	2/10/13							

Week	Day	Date	Activities	Research associate present	#Day Obs.	School Observation	# hours observed	Video	Audio
4	Monday	2/11/13	Madame Diouf's class; interview with Madame Diouf		14	8:00-1	5	X	X
	Tuesday	2/12/13	Monsieur Ba's class; interview with Monsieur Ba; Interview with Director (#2)		15	8:00-1; 15-18	8	X	X
	Wednesday	2/13/13	Monsieur Diouf's class; (no Arabic - teacher absent); walking around town with school guard; Photovoice/focus group #2 part 2 (boys); focus group #3; interview with historian; interview with Yaay Adama's father	X	16	8:00-11	3	X	X
	Thursday	2/14/13	Madame Ndoye's class; early morning - impromptu English lesson in Monsieur Diouf's class (was in Dakar)		17	8:00-1; 15-17	7	X	X
	Friday	2/15/13	Organizing "pot" for recess; Monsieur Diouf's class (AM); gym class; interview with Madame Diagne; Recess and receiving gifts; Interview with Monsieur Diouf (#2)	X	18	8:00-1	5	X	X
	Saturday	2/16/13	Wrap-up with Research associate						
	Sunday	2/17/13	Preparations for departure						
	Monday	2/18/13	Departure from Senegal						
TOTALS				**7**	**18**		**97.5**	**12**	**13**

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEWEE CHARACTERISTICS

Interviewee Name	Approx. Age of person	Ethnic group (if identified)	Years living in town	Occupation	Relationship to school	If teacher, # years teaching	If teacher, grade presently teaching
Monsieur Ndiaye	30s		7	Teacher	Teacher	7	CP
Monsieur Diouf	30s		7	Teacher	Teacher	8	CM2
Madame Ka	30s	Pulaar	3	Teacher	Teacher	10	CM2
Director	50s	Sereer	17	Director	Director	34	n/a
Monsieur Sy	50s	Pulaar	33 as teacher, living there 26	Teacher - floating	Teacher	39	floating
Pape Diop Ndoye's mother	Late 30s/early 40s	Sossé	Native	Collects shells	Mother	n/a	n/a
Madame Sarr	mid-late 30s	Lébou	0 (from next town over)	Teacher	Teacher	3	CE1
Monsieur Diouf's former landlord	60s	Lébou	Born there	Owns restaurant. (Worked on tow boat, traveled all over, in Gabon for some time.)	Parent/Diouf's former landlord	n/a	n/a
Abou Ba's grandfather	70s	Pulaar	since 77 in Senegal, married in town	Retired - formerly did all sorts of work - mechanic, domestic, etc.	Grandfather of student	n/a	n/a
Madame Sy	60s	Pulaar	2004 at school - living in town for longer	Teacher - floating	Teacher	28	floating

Interviewee Name	Approx. Age of person	Ethnic group (if identified)	Years living in town	Occupation	Relationship to school	If teacher, # years teaching	If teacher, grade presently teaching
Madame Diallo	30s	Pulaar	2 years at Louga	Teacher	Teacher	13	CE1
Ndeye Aicha's father	30s	Sereer/Wolof		Cashier, Bus company	Parent of children	n/a	n/a
Aissatou Ba's mother	40s	Pulaar		At home/other	Mother	na/a	n/a
Yaay Adama's mother	late 40s	Lébou		Housewife	Mother of student	n/a	n/a
Madame Diouf	late 30s	Sereer	10	Teacher	Teacher	10	CE2
Mr. Ba	30s	Pulaar	1	Teacher	Teacher	5	CM1
Yaay Adama's father	56	Lebou (raised with Sereers)	13 (plus 6 before went to Joal)	Entrepreneur	Parent/Treasurer of PTO	n/a	n/a
Monsieur Pouye	60s/70s	Lebou (mother was Sereer)	Native	Oral Historian/Retired/other	Helps in various ways - helps students with enquêtes - personne resource; previously helped with other duties (soccer team, theater troupe, etc.)	n/a	n/a
Madame Ndoye	30s		7	Teacher	Teacher	7	CI
Madame Diagne	50s	Pulaar	20	Teacher	Arabic/Religion Teacher	30	All

APPENDIX E

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

Name	Gender	School birthdate	Ethnic group	Mother's ethnic group / Father's ethnic group	Language spoken at home	Father's activities / Mother's activities	Birthplace	Year of Arrival in town	Student status	Residence	Who lives with
Yaay Adama	F	12/14/02	Lebou	Lebou / Lebou	Wolof	Entrepreneur / Doesn't work	Rufisque	2000	Strong	Near school, new houses (not part of cites)	Parents and siblings
Khady Diallo	F	10/21/01	Pulaar	Pulaar / Pulaar (Guinea)	Pulaar	Mayor/Politician / Non-formal	Tamba	2008	Average	On main road, new houses	Mother, siblings - father in Tamba with other wife
Ndeye Aicha	F	10/3/00	Wolof	Wolof / Wolof	Wolof	Cashier - Dakar dem dikk / Doesn't work	Guediewaye	2010; school in 2012	1st	Near entrance, new houses	Extended family - parents and father's side. Is the oldest in the family. Has only younger brothers.
Abou Ba	M	2/1/00	Pulaar	Pulaar / Unkown	Pulaar	Grandfather: retired, used to work as domestic, driver / Grandmother: market vendor	Grand Yoff	Unknown	Weaker	Village traditionnel	Maternal grandmother (his answer), grandfather, extended family (not mother)
Pape Diop Ndoye	M	4/17/00	Lebou	Sosse / Lebou	Wolof	Mason / Shells	Town	Native	Weaker	Village traditionnel	Mother and siblings

APPENDIX F

SELECTED CULTURALLY RELEVANT *CURRICULUM* TEXTS

La chasse à la plage

Les grandes vacances, moment privilégié de repos et de distractions constituent pour nous la saison de chasse aux martins-pêcheurs. Tôt le matin, mes amis et moi rangeons fils et affâts dan nos sacs à dos et suivons la pente qui débouche sur l'océan. Par le sentier qui mène à la plage, nous cheminons gaiement, la sacoche et bandoulière sur le sable fin, rincé par les vagues, des oiseaux survolent le rivage en quête d'un mets délicieux: les poissons rejetés par les vagues ou abandonnées par des pêcheurs. Sans attendre, nous plaçons les pièges à distance régulière. Blottis dans un endroit secret, nous guettons ce gibier méfiant. L'attente est longue et pénible. Brusquement, un oiseau tombe sur un piège. Sans hésiter, nous sautons de notre cachette en courant pour récupérer cette proie tant attendue. Le piège remis à sa place, nous savourons notre victoire et attendons d'autres prises.

The hunt at the beach

Summer vacation, a privileged moment for relaxing and other pastimes, was for us kingfisher hunting season. Early in the morning, my friends and I would gather our string and traps in our backpacks and go down the slope that led to the ocean. Along the path leading to the beach, we would walk happily, the bag and strap dragging along the fine sand, rinsed by the waves. The birds were flying over the shoreline in search of a nice dish: fish thrown ashore by the waves or abandoned by fishermen. Without waiting, we would set our traps at regular intervals. Nestled in a secret place, we would keep watch for that suspicious game. The wait was often long and tiresome. Suddenly, a bird would fall into a trap. Without hesitating, we would leap from our hiding place running to get our prey that we had waited for so long. Once the trap was back in its place, we would savor our victory and wait for other catches.

Le Choc des Titans:
Texte: Hercule contre Bombardier : le choc des titans ! Une seule date à retenir : vendredi 23 mars 2013 à 18 heures précises au stade Iba Mar Diouf. /

The Clash of the Titans
Text: Hercules against The Bomber: the clash of the titans! Only one date to remember: Friday, March 23, 2013 at 6 pm sharp at the Iba Mar Diouf stadium.

Ma Grand-mère

Nous l'avons connue depuis notre jeune âge. C'est une veille dame aux cheveux gracieux qui brillent comme le soleil. Avec le poids de l'âge, son front large, s'est couvert de profondes rides. Les yeux globuleux et vifs bougent sans cesse. Les joues creuses signalent l'absence de plusieurs dents.

A soixante-dix ans, elle est toujours grande et assez vigoureuse. On peut toujours admirer l'élégance de ses mouvements quand elle marche. Elle est honnête et bienveillante, ce qui la rend très attachante pour les gens qui la côtoient. /

My grandmother

We have known her since we were very young. She is an old woman with graceful hair that shines like the sun. Due to the weight of age, deep wrinkles cover her broad forehead. Her large and bright eyes move incessantly. Her hollowed cheeks signal the absence of several teeth.

At seventy years-old, she is still a large figure and fairly vigorous. We still admire her elegance and her movements when she walks. She is honest and kind, which makes those who are close to her very attached to her.

Une lettre narrative:

Souleymane Diaby
s/c de son père Aladji Diaby
Commerçant à Diana Malary
Sédhiou.

Diana Malary, le 25/2/2008

Mon cher Alain,

Je vais t'annoncer une nouvelle qui va te faire plaisir: mes parents viennent d'acheter à Sédhiou une petite maison aux murs de pierres, au toit d'ardoises et avec une cheminée ancienne.

Je t'invite à venir passer quelques jours avec nous pendant les prochaines vacances. Tu découvriras un beau paysage vert avec des bois et des ruisseaux. Oui, tu as bien lu, des bois! Toi qui aimes la chasse, tu passeras de bons moments et tu m'apprendras à chasser. J'espère que tes parents voudront bien te laisser venir chez nous.

Réponds-moi vite.

Amitiés,
Souleymane

A Narrative Letter

Souleymane Diaby
c/o his father, Aladji Diaby
Salesman at Diana Malary
Sédhiou.

Diana Malary, 2/25/2008

Dear Alain,

I am writing to tell you about some good news: my parents just bought a small house in Sédhiou. It has stonewalls, a slate roof and an old-fashioned chimney.

I'm inviting you to come spend a few days with us during your next vacation. You will find a beautiful green countryside here with woods and streams. Yes, you read right, with woods! You, who love to hunt. You will have a good time here and you can teach me how to hunt. I hope your parents will let you come visit us.

Write back soon.

All the best,

Souleymane

Le Projet d'Amina
Amina est une veuve très courageuse. Elle veut avoir une maison, mais elle n'a pas assez d'argent. Alors, elle décide de faire du commerce. Chaque jour, elle achète des pagnes et les revend. Le soir, elle rentre fatiguée, mais elle gagne un peu plus d'argent. Après quatre mois, Amina calcules ses bénéfices. Ils sont assez importants. Elle sais qu'elle va réussir son projet. Deux ans plus tard, la jeune femme achète une parcelle. Son cousin, Amady, le maçon, lui construit une belle maison. Maintenant, Amina est heureuse avec ses enfants. /

Amina's Project
Amina is a very courageous widow. She wants to have a house, but she doesn't have enough money. So, she decides that she is going into retail. Each day, she buys pieces of fabric and resells them. In the evening, she goes home tired, but she earns a little more money. After four months, Amina calculates her profits. They are significant enough. She knows that she is going to succeed with her project. Two years later, the young woman buys a plot of land. Her cousin, Amady, the mason, constructs a beautiful house for her. Now, Amina is happy with her children.

APPENDIX G

SENEGALESE EDUCATION LAW 91-22 (ABRIDGED)

Loi no 91-22 du 30 janvier 1991 d'orientation de l'Éducation nationale

L'Assemblée nationale a délibéré et adopté en sa séance du mercredi 30 janvier 1991 ;

Le président de la République promulgue la loi dont la teneur suit :

TITRE I

DISPOSITIONS GÉNÉRALES

Article 1er

L'Éducation nationale, au sens de la présente loi, tend :

1. à préparer les conditions d'un développement intégral, assumé par la nation toute entière : elle a pour but de former des hommes et des femmes capables de travailler efficacement à la construction du pays ; elle porte un intérêt particulier aux problèmes économiques, sociaux et culturels rencontrés par le Sénégal dans son effort de développement et elle garde un souci constant de mettre les formations qu'elle dispense en relation avec ses problèmes et leurs solutions.

2. à promouvoir les relations dans lesquelles la nation se reconnaît : elle est éducation pour la liberté, la démocratie pluraliste et le respect des droits de l'homme, développant le moral et le civique de ceux qu'elle forme, elle vise à en faire des hommes et des femmes dévoués au bien commun, respectueux des lois et des règles de la vie sociale et oeuvrant à les améliorer dans le sens de la justice, de l'équité et du respect mutuel.

3. à élever le milieu culturel de la population : elle permet aux hommes et aux femmes qu'elle forme d'acquérir les connaissances nécessaires à leur insertion harmonieuse dans la communauté et à leur participation active à la vie de la nation ; elle leur fournit les instruments de réflexion, leur permettant d'exercer un jugement ; participant à l'avancée des sciences et des techniques, elle maintient la nation dans le courant du progrès contemporain.

Article 2

L'Éducation nationale contribue à faire acquérir la capacité de transformer le milieu et la société et aide chacun à épanouir ses potentialités :

1. en assurant une formation qui lie l'école à la vie, la théorie à la pratique, l'enseignement à la production, conçue comme activité éducative devant contribuer au développement des facultés intellectuelles et de l'habilité manuelle des enseignés, tout en les préparant à une insertion harmonieuse dans la vie professionnelle ;

2. en adaptant ses contenus, objectifs et méthodes aux besoins spécifiques des enseignés, en fonction des âges, des étapes de l'enseignement, des filières les plus aptes à l'épanouissement optimal de leur possibilités ;

3. en établissant entre les différentes filières et les différents paliers de l'éducation les passerelles permettant les réorientations et les promotions souhaitées et jugées légitimes ;

4. en mettant en place une éducation spéciale qui prend en charge les victimes des différents handicaps ou inadaptations, pour réaliser leur intégration ou réinsertion scolaires et sociales.

TITRE II

PRINCIPES GÉNÉRAUX DE L'ÉDUCATION NATIONALE

Article 3

L'éducation nationale est placée sous la responsabilité de l'État, qui garantit aux citoyens la réalité du droit à l'éducation par la mise en place d'un système de formation. Les collectivités locales et publiques contribuent à l'effort de l'État en matière d'éducation. L'initiation privée, individuelle ou collective, peut, dans les conditions définies par la loi, concourir à l'œuvre d'éducation et de formation. L'État est garant de la qualité de l'éducation et de la formation, ainsi que des titres décernés. Il contrôle les niveaux de l'éducation et de la formation.

Article 4

L'Éducation nationale est laïque : elle respecte et garantit à tous les niveaux la liberté de conscience des citoyens. Par ailleurs, l'Éducation nationale, sur la base des principes de laïcité de l'Etat, est favorable aux établissements privés susceptibles de dispenser un enseignement religieux.

Article 5

L'Éducation nationale est démocratique : elle donne à tous des chances égales de réussite. Elle s'inspire du droit reconnu à tout être humain de recevoir l'instruction et la formation correspondant à ses aptitudes, sans discrimination de sexe, d'origine sociale, de race, d'ethnie, de religion ou de nationalité.

Article 6

L'Éducation nationale est sénégalaise et africaine : développant l'enseignement des langues nationales, instruments privilégiés pour donner aux enseignés un contact vivant avec leur culture et les enraciner dans leur histoire, elle forme un Sénégalais conscient de son appartenance et de son identité. Dispensant une connaissance approfondie de l'histoire et des cultures africaines, dont elle met en valeur toutes les richesses et tous les apports du patrimoine universel, l'Education nationale souligne les solidarités du continent et cultive le sens de l'unité africaine. L'Éducation nationale reflète également l'appartenance du Sénégal à la communauté de culture des pays francophones, en même temps qu'elle est ouverte sur les valeurs de civilisation universelle et qu'elle s'inscrit dans les grands courants du monde contemporain : par là, elle développe l'esprit de coopération et de paix entre les hommes.

MY TRANSLATION: The national education system is Senegalese and African, developing instruction in national languages, privileged instruments for putting learners dynamically in touch with their culture and rooting them in their history, and developing Senegalese people conscious of their membership and identity. Providing a deep understanding of African history and culture, in which the richness and strengths of universal heritage is validated, the national education system emphasizes African solidarity and unity. The national education system also reflects Senegal's membership in the Francophone cultural community, at the same time that it is open to universal values and trends of the contemporary world. In this respect, the national education system also promotes a sense of cooperation and peace between human beings (my translation).

Article 7

L'Éducation nationale est permanente et au service du peuple sénégalais : elle vise l'éradication complète et définitive de l'analphabétisme, ainsi que le perfectionnement professionnel et la promotion sociale de tous les citoyens, pour l'amélioration des conditions d'existence et d'emploi et l'élévation de la productivité du travail.

…

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdi, A. A. (2013). Decolonizing educational and social dvelopment platforms in Africa. *African and Asian Studies 12*, 64-82.

Agence de Presse Sénégalaise. (2009). *Sénégal: Curriculum pour l'éducation de base - la généralisation reportée à octobre 2009*. April 3, 2009. Accessed on November 6, 2013 from http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/200904030680.html

Agrawal, A. (1995). Dismantling the divide between indigenous and scientific knowledge. *Development and Change 26*, 413-439.

Agrawal, A. (2002). Indigenous knowledge and the politics of classification. *International Social Science Journal 54*(173), 287-297.

Aikenhead, G. S. & Michell, H. (2011). *Bridging cultures: Indigenous and scientific ways of knowing nature*. Toronto, Canada: Pearson Canada Inc.

Aikenhead, G. S. & Ogawa, M. (2007). Indigenous knowledge and science revisited. *Cultural Studies of Science Education 2*, 539-592.

Alexander, R. (2008). *Education for all, the quality imperative and the problem of pedagogy*. Brighton, UK: University of Sussex, Center for International Education, Consortium for Research on Educational. Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE).

Alidou, H. (2009). Promoting multilingual and multicultural education in Francophone Africa: Challenges and perspectives. In B. Brock-Utne & I. Skattum (Eds.), *Languages and education in Africa : A comparative and transdisciplinary analysis*, pp. 105-132. Oxford, UK: Symposium Books.

Alidou, H. & Brock-Utne, B. (2011). Teaching practices – teaching in a familiar language. In A. Ouane & C. Glanz, (Eds.), *Optimising learning, education and publishing in Africa: The language factor. A review and analysis of theory and practice in mother-tongue and bilingual education in Sub-Saharan Africa,* pp. 159-186. Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), African Development Bank.

Altbach, P.G. (1971). Education and neocolonialism. *Teachers College Record 72*(4), 543-558.

Asante, M. K. (2010). Foreword. In G. J. S. Dei (Ed.), *Teaching Africa: Towards a Transgressive Pedagogy*, p. vii-ix. New York, NY: Springer.

Babaci-Wilhite, Z., Macleans, A. G., & Lou, S. (2012). Education and language: A human right for sustainable development in Africa. *International Review of Education 58*(5), 619-647.

Baker, D. & LeTendre, G. (2005). *National differences, global similarities: World culture and the future of schooling.* Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Balkenhol, B. & Gueye, E. H. (1994). Tontines and the banking system: Is there a case for building linkages. *Small Enterprise Development 5*(1), 47-55.

Barker, C. (2003). *Cultural studies: theory and practice* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.

Barnhardt, R. & Kawagley, A. O. (2005). Indigenous knowledge systems and Alaska Native ways of knowing. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly 36*(1), 8-23.

Battiste, M. (2002). *Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy in First Nations education: A literature review with recommendations*. Paper prepared for the National Working Group on Education and the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). Ottawa, ON: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Retrieved July 1, 2012, from http://www.usask.ca/education/people/battistem/ikpe.pdf

Blakemore, P. (1970). Assimilation and association in French educational policy and practice: Senegal, 1903-1939. In V. M. Battle & C. H. Lyons (Eds), *Essays in the history of African Education*, 85-103. New York: Teachers College Press: 1970.

Booker, M. K. (1996). *A practical introduction to literary theory and criticism*. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers.

Briggs, J. & Sharp, J. (2004). Indigenous knowledges and development: A postcolonial caution. *Third World Quarterly 25*(4), 661-676.

Brock-Utne, B. (2000). *Whose education for all?* New York & London: Falmer Press.

Brock-Utne, Birgit. (2000). *Whose education for all?: Recolonization of the African mind, part II*. New York, NY: Falmer Press

Cappello, M. (2005). Photo interviews: Eliciting data through conversations with children. *Field methods 17*(2), 170–182.

Charlier, J. (2002). Le retour de Dieu: l'introduction de l'enseignement religieux dans l'École de la République laïque du Sénégal. *Education et sociétés 2*(10), 95-111.

Chikodzi, I. & Nyota, S. (2010). The Interplay of culture and mathematics: the Shona rural classroom. *Journal of Pan African Studies 3*(10), 3-15.

Cho, J. & Trent, A. (2006). Validity in qualitative research revisited. *Qualitative Research 6*(3), 319-340.

Christie, M. (2006). Transdisciplinary research and aboriginal knowledge. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education 35*, 78-89.

CIDA. (2011). *Evaluation of CIDA's Senegal program from 2001 to 2010: Synthesis report.* Accessed on November 6, 2013 from http://www.oecd.org/countries/senegal/48888140.pdf.

Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Cruise O'Brien, D. B. (2003) *Symbolic confrontations: Muslims imagining the state in Africa.* New York, NY: Palgrave.

Dahaner, G., Schirato, T. & Webb, J. (2000) *Understanding Foucault*. London: Sage Publications.

Dei, G. J. S. (2000a). Local knowledges and educational reforms in Ghana. *Canadian and International Education 29*(1), 37-71.

Dei, G. J. S. (2000b). Rethinking the role of Indigenous knowledges in the academy. *International Journal of Inclusive Education 4*(2), 111-132.

Dei, G. J. S. (2002). Learning culture, spirituality and local knowledge: Implications for African schooling. *International Review of Education 48*(5), 335-360.

Dei, G. J. S. (2004). *Schooling and education in Africa: The case of Ghana*. Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, Inc.

Dei, G. J. S. (2008). Indigenous knowledge studies and the next generation: pedagogical possibilites for anti-colonial education. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education 37*(S), 5-12.

Dei, G. J. S. (2010). *Teaching Africa: Towards a Transgressive Pedagogy*. New York, NY: Springer.

DeStefano, J., Lynd, M. R., & Thornton, B. (2009). *The Quality of basic education in Senegal: A review (Final report).* The Center for Collaboration and the Future of Schooling. Accessed on November 5, 2013 from pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADP648.pdf.

Devisse, J. (1985). The development of education and training in Africa: an outline of history for 1930-1980. In UNESCO, *The educational process and historiography in Africa: Final Report and papers of the symposium organized by Unesco in Dakar (Senegal) from 25 to 29 January 1982.* Paris: UNESCO, pp. 11-19.

Diallo, G. (2003). Indigenous forms of learning in West Africa: The case of Mauritania. *Education in Africa 2*, 13-53.

Diallo, I. (2010). *Politics of national languages in postcolonial Senegal.* Amherst, NY: Cambria Press.

Diame, M. (2011) Traditional culture and educational success in Sénégal, West Africa. Masters Thesis at the University of Oregon. Accessed on December 1, 2011 from *https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/.../Diame_Maguette_ma2011sp.pdf...*

Diarra, D., Fall, M., Gueye, P. M., Mara, M. & J. Marchand. (2000). *Les écoles communautaires de base au Sénégal*. Paris: UNESCO. Accessed on August 16, 2012 from http://www.unesco.org/iiep/eng/publications/recent/abstracts/B166.htm.

Dieng, M. (2006). Curriculum de l'éducation de base - L'entrée par les compétences en phase d'extension. *Seneweb*, December 2, 2006. Accessed online November 6, 2013 from http://www.seneweb.com/news/Societe/curriculum-de-l-education-de-base-l-entr-e-par-les-comp-tences-en-phase-d-extension_n_6991.html.

Direction de la Planification et de la Réforme de l'Education (DPRE). (2008). *Rapport national sur la situation de l'education 2007*. Dakar, Senegal: Ministère de l'education, de l'enseignment technique et de la formation professionennelle du Sénégal.

Eder, D. & Fingerson, L. (2002). Interviewing children and adolescents. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research,* pp. 181-201. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Escobar, A. 1995. Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the third world. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Epstein, I., Stevens, B., McKeever, P. & Baruchel, S. (2006). Photo elicitation interview (PEI): Using photos to elicit children's perspectives. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods 5(*30, 1-11.

Fanon, F. (2004). *The wretched of the earth*. Trans. Richard Philcox. New York, NY: Grove Press.

Fatnowna, S. & Pickett, H. (2002). The Place of indigenous knowledge systems in the post-postmodern integrative paradigm shift. In C. A. Odora Hoppers (Ed.), *Indigenous knowledge ad the integration of knowledge systems: Towards a philosophy of articulation* (pp. 257-285). Claremont, South Africa: New Africa Books.

Gachanga, T. (2005). Education for peace in Kenya: Indigenous peace traditions and the millennium development goals. *Africa Files* 1. Accessed on August 19, 2012 from http://www.africafiles.org/atissueezine.asp?issue=issue1

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In C. Geertz (Ed.), The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays. New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers.

Giroux, H. (1992). *Border crossings: cultural workers and the politics of education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Giuliano, K. (2002). *The Visible and invisible Senegalese: human spirit interaction.* Unpublished undergraduate honors thesis: Georgetown University.

Glasson, G. E., Mhango, N., Phiri, A. & Lanier, M. (2010). Sustainability science education in Africa: Negotiating indigenous ways of living with nature in the third space. International *Journal of Science Education 32*(1), 125-141.

Guillemin, M. & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and "ethically important moments in research." *Qualitative Inquiry 10*(2), 261-280.

Heugh, K. H. (2011). Cost implications of the provision of mother-tongue and strong bilingual models of education in Africa. In A. Ouane & C. Glanz, (Eds.). (2011). *Optimising learning, education and publishing in Africa: The language factor. A review and analysis of theory and practice in mother-tongue and bilingual education in Sub-Saharan Africa,* pp. 257-290. Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), African Development Bank.

Higgs, P. (2008). Towards an indigenous African educational discourse: A philosophical reflection. *International Review of Education 54*, 445-458.

Holliday, A. (2013). The politics of ethics in diverse cultural settings: Colonising the centre stage. *Compare 43*(4), 537-554.

Hountondji, P. (2002). Knowledge appropriation in a post-colonial context. In C. A. Odora Hoppers (Ed.), *Indigenous knowledge ad the integration of knowledge systems: towards a philosophy of articulation* (pp. 23-38). Claremont, South Africa: New Africa Books.

Jeffrey, B. & Troman, G. (2004). Time for ethnography. British Educational Research Journal 30(4), 535-548.

Jegede, O. J. (1997): School science and the development of scientific culture: a review of contemporary science education in Africa. *International Journal of Science Education, 19*(1), 1-20.

Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. (2002) Discourse analysis as theory and method. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.

Kane, A. (2002). Financial arrangements across borders: Women's predominant participation in popular finance, from Thilogne and Dakar to Paris. In B. Lemire, R. Pearson & G. G. Campbell (Eds.) *Women and Credit: Researching the past, refiguring the future*, pp. 295-318. Oxford, U.K.: Berg.

Kanu, Y. (2006). Reappropriating traditions in curricular imagination. In Y. Kanu (Ed.), *Curriculum as a cultural practice: Postcolonial imaginations*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 203-222.

Keane, M. (2008). Science education and worldview. *Cultural Studies of Science Education 3*, 587-621.

Kembo-Sure. (2002). 'Little' languages and their 'little' speakers: linguistic diversity and cultural development in Africa. In Owino, F. (Ed.), *Speaking African,* pp. 17-32. Cape Town, South Africa: Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society.

Knight, P. (2002). *Small-scale research: Pragmatic inquiry in social science and the caring professions.* London: Sage.

Knoblauch, H. (2005). Focused ethnography. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research 6*(3), Article 44.

Kwang Johnson, N. (2004). Senegalese “into Frenchmen”? The French technology of nationalism in Senegal. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics 10*(1), 135-158.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995a). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice 34*(3), 159-165.

LeCompte, M. D. & Schensul, J. J. (2010). *Designing and conducting ethnographic research: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: AntaMira Press.

Leedy, P. D. & J. E. Ormond. (2005). *Practical Research: Planning and design (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: PEARSON: Merrill Prentice Hall.*

Lipka, J. (1991). Toward a Culturally Based Pedagogy: A Case Study of One Yup'ik Eskimo Teacher. Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 22: 3, pp. 203-223.

Lipka, J., Yanez, E., Andrew-Ihre, D., & Adam, S. (2009). A two-way process for developing effective culturally based math: Examples from math in a cultural context. In B. Green, S. Mukhopadhyay, A. B. Powell & S. Nelson-Barber (Eds.), *Culturally responsive mathematics education*, pp. 257-280. New York, NY: Routledge.

Luoch, T. O. & Ogutu, E-A. (2002). The use of mother tongue and tribalism: a misconceived association. In F. Owino (Ed.), *Speaking African: African languages for education and development*, pp. 89-98. Cape Town, South Africa: Centre For Advanced Studies of African Society.

Macedo, D. (1999). Decolonizing indigenous knowledge. In L. M. Semali & J. L. Kincheloe. (Eds.), *What is Indigenous knowledge? Voices from the academy*, pp. xi-xvi. New York, NY: Falmer Press.

Maeda, M. (2009).Education and cultural hybridity: what cultural values should be imparted to students in Kenya? *Compare 39*(3), 335-348

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (2011). Designing qualitative research (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Matthews, H. & Tucker, F. (2000). Consulting children. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education 24(*2), 299-310.

Mazonde, I. N. (n.d.) Culture and education in the development of Africa. Accessed on November 16, 2011 from *unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/.../IDEP/UNPAN003347.pdf*

McKinley, E. (2007). Postcolonialism, indigenous students, and science education. In S. K. Abell & N. G. Lederman (Eds.), *Handbook of research on science education* (pp. 199 226). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

McLaughlin, F. (2001). Dakar Wolof and the configuration of an urban identity. *Journal of African Cultural Studies 14*(2), 153-172.

McLaughlin, F. (2008). The ascent of Wolof as an urban vernacular and national lingua franca in Senegal. In C. B. Vigouroux & S. S. Mufwene (Eds.), *Globalization and language vitality: Perspectives from Africa* (142 – 170). London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Mkosi, N. (2005). Surveying indigenous knowledge, the curriculum, and development in Africa: A critical African viewpoint. In A. A. Abdi & A. Cleghorn (Eds.), *Issues in African Education: Sociological perspectives*, pp. 85-99. Gordonsville, VA, USA: Palgrave Macmillan.

Miller-Grandvaux, Y. & Yoder, K. (2002). *A Literature review of community schools in Africa.* Washington, DC: Support for Analysis and Research in Africa Project (SARA).

Moosa, D. (2013). Challenges to anonymity and representation in educational qualitative research in a small community: A reflection on my journey. *Compare 43*(4), 483-495.

Morehouse School of Medicine & Cosaan Foundation. (1996*). Coumba Lamba, USA. An African Traditional Healing Ceremony held in gathering with Native Americans.* Accessed online January 11, 2014 from http://prometra.org/file/Publication_pdf/Coumba%20lamba%20USA.pdf.

Moumouni, A. (1968). *Education in Africa*. Trans. Ott, P.N. London: André Deutsch.

Nakata, M. (2007). The cultural interface. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Studies 36*(Supplement), pp. 7-14.

Ndiaye, M. (2013). Les élèves évalués en fonction du curriculum de l'éducation de base: Examen d'entrée en sixième 2013. *Seneplus*. May 31, 2013. Accessed on November 6, 2013 from http://seneplus.com/article/les-%C3%A9l%C3%A8ves-%C3%A9valu%C3%A9s-en-fonction-du-curriculum-de-l%E2%80%99%C3%A9ducation-de-base.

Ngũgĩ, wa T. (1993). *Moving the centre: The struggle for cultural freedoms*. London: James Currey.

Niane, B. & François, R. (2007). *Country Profile commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, Strong foundations: early childhood care and education*. Paris, France: UNESCO.

Ntarangwi, M. (2003). The challenges of education and development in post-colonial Kenya. *Africa Development 28*(3 & 4), 211-228.

Ntuli, P. P. (2002). Indigenous knowledge systems and the African renaissance. In C. A. Odora Hoppers (Ed.), *Indigenous knowledge ad the integration of knowledge systems: towards a philosophy of articulation* (pp. 53-66). Claremont, South Africa: New Africa Books.

Obanya, P. (1995). Case studies of curriculum innovation in Western Africa. *International Review of Education 41*(5), 315-336.

Odora Hoppers, C. A. (2000). The centre-periphery in knowledge production in the twenty-first century. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education 30*(3), 283-291.

Odora Hoppers, C. A. (2002). Indigenous knowledge and the integration of knowledge systems. In C. A. Odora Hoppers (Ed.), *Indigenous knowledge ad the integration of knowledge systems: towards a philosophy of articulation* (pp. 2-22). Claremont, South Africa: New Africa Books.

Odora Hoppers, C. A. (2009). *Catherine Hoppers on research, knowledge and development*. Accessed on August 17, 2012 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Og0u-ohkvLI.

Okebukola, F. O. (2009). Towards an enriched beginning reading programme in Yoruba. In B. Brock-Utne & I. Skattum (Eds.). *Languages and education in Africa: a comparative and transdisciplinary analysis*, pp. 313-332. Oxford : Symposium Books.

Ortner, S. B. (1997). Introduction. Special Issue: "The fate of 'culture'": Geertz & Beyond. *Representations 59*, 1-13.

Ortner, S. B. (2006). *Anthropology and social theory: Culture, power and the acting subject.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Ouane, A., & Glanz, C. (Eds.) (2011). *Optimising learning, education and publishing in Africa: The language factor. A review and analysis of theory and practice in mother-tongue and bilingual education in Sub-Saharan Africa.* Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), African Development Bank.

Owuor, J.A. (2007). Integrating African indigenous knowledge in Kenya's formal education System: The potential for sustainable development. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education 2*(2), 21-37.

Panda, M. & Mohanty, A. K. (2009). Language matters, so does culture: Beyond the rhetoric of culture in multilingual education. In A. K. Mohanty, M. Panda, R. Phillipson & T. Skutnabb-Kangas (Eds.), *Multilingual education for social justice: Globalising the local*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, pp. 295-312.

Paulson, R. (2010) *Enhancing learning through the use of mother tongue language: Analysis of the forces for and against mother tongue education.* Unpublished comprehensive exam: University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Pillai, S. (2001). *Strategies for introducing new curricula in West Africa.* Final report of the seminar/workshop held in Lagos, Nigeria, 12–16 November 2, 2001. Geneva, Switzerland, UNESCO.

Prah, K. K. (2002). Researching African languages for scientific and technological development: The CASAS Experience. In F. Owino (Ed.), *Speaking African,* pp. 9-16. Cape Town, South Africa: Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society.

Prometra International. (2014). *Projects.* Accessed online January 11, 2014 from http://prometra.org/articles.php?lng=en&pg=98#r5

Purcell, T. W. (1998). Indigenous knowledge and applied anthropology: questions of definition and direction. *Human Organization 57*(3), 258-272.

Quist, H. O. (2001). Cultural issues in secondary education development in West Africa: Away from colonial survivals towards neocolonial influences? *Comparative Education 37*(3), 297-314.

Quiroz, C. (1999). Local knowledge systems and vocational education in developing countries. In L. M. Semali & J. L. Kincheloe (Eds.), *What is indigenous knowledge? Voices from the academy* (pp. 305-316). New York: Falmer Press.

Reynar, R. (1999). Indigenous people's knowledge and education: a tool for development? In L. M. Semali & J. L. Kincheloe (Eds.), *What is indigenous knowledge? Voices from the academy* (pp. 285-304). New York: Falmer Press.

Roberts, M. (1998). Indigenous knowledge and Western science: perspectives from the Pacific. In D. Hodson (Ed.), *Science and technology education and ethnicity: An Aotearoa/New Zealand Perspective* (Miscellaneous Series 50, pp. 59-75). Proceedings of a Conference held at The Royal Society of New Zealand, Thorndon, Wellington, May 7-8, 1996. Wellington: The Royal Society of New Zealand.

Rosaldo, R. (1993). *Culture and truth: The remaking of social analysis with a new introduction*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Rossman, G. B., Blanco, G. R. & Sarr, K. G. (2013). Compressed Ethnographies in International Settings. Workshop presented on November 2, 2013 at the *Comparative and International Education Society Northeast Regional Conference,* Amherst, Massachusetts.

Rossman, G. & S. Rallis. (2012). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research (3rd Ed).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Rossman, G. B. & Rallis, S. (2010). Everyday ethics: Reflections on practice. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education 23*(4), 379-391.

Rust, V. D. (1991). Postmodernism and its comparative education implications. *Comparative Education Review 35*(4), pp. 610-626.

Rutherford, J. (1990). The third space: interview with Homi Bhabha. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: Community, culture, difference.* London: Lawrence and Wishart, 207-221.

Sagna, N. (2007). Sénégal: Curriculum de l'éducation de base - Une innovation pédagogique d'envergure pour réformer l'école. *Wafadjri*. November 29, 2007. Accessed online on November 6, 2013 from http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/200711290910.html.

Schafer J., Ezirim, M., Gamurorwa, A., Ntsonyane, P., Phiri, M., Sagnia, J., Salakana, L., & Bairu, W. W. (2004). Exploring and Promoting the Value of Indigenous Knowledge in Early Childhood Development in Africa. *International Journal of Educational Policy, Research, & Practice 5*(3), 61-80.

Schram, T.H. *Conceptualizing and proposing qualitative research.* (2006). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson /Merrill Prentice Hall.

Said, E. (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Sarr, K. G. (2012). *Narrowing the gap: The promise of integrating Indigenous knowledges into formal schooling in West Africa*. Unpublished comprehensive exam: University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Sarr, K. G. (2013). "We lost our culture with civilization": Community perceptions of Indigenous knowledge and education in Senegal. In C. Benson & K. Kosonen (Eds.), *Language issues in comparative education: Inclusive teaching and learning in non-dominant languages and cultures,* pp. 115-131. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Sarre, I. (2002) Sénégal: Enseignement religieux à l'ecole à mi-distance de toutes les convictions. *SudQuotidien:* August 14, 2002. Accessed online on January 6, 2014 from http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/200208140585.html.

Semali, L. M. (1999). Community as classroom: (Re)valuing indigenous literacy. In L. M. Semali & J. L. Kincheloe (Eds.), *What is Indigenous knowledge? Voices from the academy*, pp. 95-118. New York, NY: Falmer Press.

Semali, L. M. & Kincheloe, J. L. (1999). Introduction: What is indigenous knowledge? Why should we study it? In Semali, L. M. & J. L. Kincheloe (Eds.), *What is Indigenous knowledge? Voices from the academy*, pp. 1-57. New York, NY: Falmer Press.

Semali, L. M. & Mehta, K. (2012). Science education in Tanzania: Challenges and policy responses. *International Journal of Educational Research 53*, 225-239.

Sénégal. (1979). *Decret n°79-1165 du 20 decembre 1979: Portant organisation de l'Enseignement élémentaire.* Accessed on November 9, 2013 from http://igen.education.sn/programmes/decrets/DECRET%20n%2079%20-1165.pdf.

Sénégal. (1991). *Loi no 91-22 du 30 janvier 1991 d'orientation de l'Éducation nationale.* Accessed on February 17, 2014 from http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/afrique/senegal-loi.htm.

Sénégal. (2004). *Journal Officiel Du Senegal: Loi 2004-37 du 15 Décembre 2004*. Accessed on January 6, 2014 from http://www.jo.gouv.sn/spip.php?page=imprimer&id_article=2689.

Sillitoe, P. & Marzano, M. (2009). Future of indigenous knowledge research in development. *Futures 41*, 13-23.

Skattum, I. (2009) French or National Languages as Means of Instruction? Reflections on French domination and possible future changes. In B. Brock-Utne & G. Garbo (Eds.), *Language and Power. Implications of Language for Peace and Development,* pp. 171-181. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples.* New York, N.Y.: Zed Books.

Surber, J. P. (1998). *Culture and critique: An introduction to the critical discourses of cultural studies*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Swigart, L. (1994). Cultural creolisation and language use in post-colonial Africa: The case of Senegal. *Africa 64*(2), 175-189.

Sylla, A. (1992). *Le Peuple Lebou de la presqu'ile du Cap-Vert*. Dakar: Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines du Sénégal.

Taylor, P. C. (2006). Towards culturally inclusive science teacher education. *Cultural Studies of Science Education 1*, 189-208.

Tema, B. O. (2002). Science education and Africa's rebirth. In C. A. Odora Hoppers (Ed.), *Indigenous knowledge ad the integration of knowledge systems: towards a philosophy of articulation* (pp. 128-140). Claremont, South Africa: New Africa Books.

Tikkly, L. (2004). Education and the new imperialism. *Comparative Education 40*(2), 173-198.

Tikkly, L. & Bond, T. (2013). Towards a postcolonial research ethics in comparative and international education. *Compare 43*(4), 422-442.

UNAIDS. (2012). *Country Overview: Senegal.* Accessed on October 25, 2013 from http://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/senegal/.

UNESCO. (2011). *Education for All global monitoring report 2011: The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

UNESCO. (2012). *Fiche EPT Sénégal.* Dakar: UNESCO: Bureau regional pour l'éducation en Afrique. Accessed online February 17, 2014 from http://www.unesco.org/new/fr/dakar/about-this-office/single view/news/fact_sheets_on_24_african_countries_unlikely_to_met_the_efa_goals _by_2015/

United Nations. (2007). *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the General Assembly.* Accessed online on February 17, 2014 from http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples/DeclarationontheRightsofIndigenousPe oples.aspx.

Vavrus, F. (2003). *Desire and decline: Schooling amid crisis in Tanzania*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Press.

Walford, G. (2002). Introduction. In G. Walford (Ed.), *Doing a doctorate in educational ethnography. Studies in Educational Ethnography 7.* London: Elsevier.

Walford, G. (2004). Preface. In G. Troman, B. Jeffrey & G. Walford. Identity, agency and social institutions in educational ethnography. *Studies in Educational Ethnography 10.* Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Elsevier.

Wallace, C. S. (2004). Framing new research in science literacy and language use: Authenticity, multiple discourses and the third space. *Science Education 88*, 901-914.

Wandira, A. (1971). *Indigenous education in Uganda: A study of the practice and purpose of indigenous education in Uganda*. Kampala, Uganda: Makarere University.

Wane, N. N. (2005). African Indigenous knowledge: Claiming, writing, storing, and sharing the discourse. *Journal of Thought 40*(2), 27-46. Accessed via ProQuest on May 28, 2012.

Wane, N.N. (2008). Mapping the field of indigenous knowledges in anti-colonial discourse: A transformative journey in education. *Race, Ethnicity and Education 11*(2), 183-197.

Xavier de Brito, A. & Vasquez, A. (1999). Image as a symbolic gift. In A. Massy & G. Waldorf (Eds.), *Studies in educational ethnography: Exploration in methodology*, vol. 2, pp. 109-125. Stamford, Connecticut: Jai Press Inc.

XXXX. (1952).

XXXX. (2009).

Yoder, L. (nd). "Senegal – Educational System – Overview." Accessed online November 15, 2012 from http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1311/Senegal-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM-OVERVIEW.html.

Zulu, I. (2006). Critical indigenous African education and knowledge. *The Journal of Pan African Studies 1*(3), 32-49.